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President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 179 (*continued*)

Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/55/529)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.13)

Mr. Lelong (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Those who spoke from this rostrum yesterday addressed many crucial aspects of the AIDS scourge, which authorities agree is now a widespread and alarming pandemic. It is with equal concern that we see our economic and human resources being decimated and our future jeopardized by the uncontrolled spread of this pandemic. Mr. Mandela was right when he launched this warning at the 1997 Davos Economic Forum:

> "AIDS kills those on whom society relies to grow the crops, work in the mines and the factories, run the schools and govern nations and countries."

The virus was identified some 20 years ago. At the time, no one thought that AIDS would become an unprecedented worldwide problem. According to estimates of the United Nations Children's Fund and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 34 million people are affected by HIV/AIDS today, about 30 per cent of whom — almost 10 million — are between 15 and 24 years old.

HIV/AIDS is destroying our populations and my country is bearing the full brunt of the assault. Information gathered by the Centre GHEISKO — a Haitian centre for research and information on Karposi's Sarcoma and opportunistic infections — and by the Ministry of Public Health indicates that 5 per cent of adults are seropositive — 10 per cent of the urban adult population and 4 per cent of the rural population. In several regions of the country, tests for young adults between the ages of 15 and 49 have shown that 1 in 12 is living with AIDS. The ratio of men and women living with AIDS is almost 1:1 and 80 per cent of seropositive young adults were infected in adolescence.

Unprotected sexual relations between men and women are among the main causes of transmission of this disease. On the one hand, young women who generally do not know how to protect themselves tend to believe that they are not in danger, whereas older men imagine that they cannot be infected if they have relations with younger women. We should recall one of the guidelines of the HIV/AIDS programme of the United Nations Development Programme, which stipulates that, in order for women to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS infection and its consequences, we need to remedy the imbalance in

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power relations between individuals and in society, which is manifest in the subordination of women.

To our great despair, young adults affected by the virus often have underage children or elderly parents to support. In Haiti, HIV/AIDS is not just a health problem; it is a social, economic, educational, moral and cultural obstacle, since it spreads in an extremely fragile political and socio-economic context. The epidemic simply exacerbates the inequalities and poverty that affect the great majority of the population. AS UNAIDS stresses, relations between economic development policies and HIV/AIDS are complex. Throughout the country, data show that the HIV/AIDS epidemic affects and is affected by economic development.

This is a grim picture and these figures cause one to shudder. The AIDS epidemic is robbing us of our future although we have the means to stem its wild advance. It is not a conventional enemy, but it claims more victims than any war. Each hour, six people are infected, 110 die of AIDS and 110 new cases develop among those who are already seropositive in our country. More than 150 Haitian children will be orphaned by the end of the year — a statistic that could double by 2010.

Aware of the gravity and urgency of the situation, my Government has adopted a series of initiatives encompassing questions related to the education of women, the management of family reproduction, rape and sexual abuse, child prostitution and drugs. Our Government, together with certain actors of civil society, has also particularly stressed the role to be played by the media in preventing AIDS and in educating the masses. Educational programmes have been launched to make people aware of the disease and to show them how it spreads and how to prevent it. Community programmes established with some non-governmental organizations have set up educational centres where courses are given in literacy, health, family planning, AIDS awareness among the young and sexually transmitted diseases. Condoms are also distributed at these centres.

Apart from this type of initiative, the current trend is to use traditional public spaces, such as churches, schools and rallying points, for consciousness-raising. The Centre GHEISKO that I referred to earlier was the first institution of the developing countries and the second in the world to treat AIDS victims. Today, together with research centres in Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago, studies are under way to find an AIDS vaccine. The Centre has developed a treatment for tuberculosis in AIDS patients that is now recommended by the World Health Organization. The drug used is known as "AZT for the poor". The tireless work of Dr. Jean William Pape was recently recognized at the awards ceremony organized by UNDP on 23 October.

Haiti, like many other countries ravaged by AIDS and poverty, needs the assistance of the international community to support our domestic initiatives. It is in this context that we have launched an initiative to renew partnership and international solidarity to confront this human tragedy, in which we are, unfortunately, actors and spectators. We therefore support the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in order to elaborate strategies and measures to combat this scourge. Only a worldwide effort will allow us to overcome it.

For all of these reasons, and mindful of the need to break the conspiracy of silence around AIDS, Haiti is pleased to associate itself with the delegation of Ukraine as a sponsor of the draft resolution on research in, prevention of and mobilizing against this terrible scourge.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): The spread of HIV/AIDS has become a serious health issue that threatens to reverse a generation of accomplishments in human development and is now becoming a social crisis on a global scale. It threatens the balance of productive employment and livelihood of people in every continent, making it a global problem of unprecedented magnitude and scope in terms of consequences for economic growth, social progress and international peace and security.

Since the time of its first occurrence, HIV/AIDS has spread in a dramatic manner, especially in Africa. Of the estimated over 34.5 million HIV-positive people worldwide, about 24.5 million are from the African continent. What this means is that the demographic, economic and social effects, as well as the national security impact of AIDS on our countries, is enormous. The epidemic consumes our potential and requires that we divert our meagre resources from our development endeavour to AIDS-related activities.

AIDS affects every social group in our societies. It is taking the lives of our citizens. AIDS does not

discriminate, but the young are the most frequent victims of this disease. As this sector of the population constitutes the skilled manpower in any nation, the impact of the loss of the young on economic and social development can hardly be overemphasized. The number of children infected or orphaned by AIDS is ever increasing. In sum, AIDS is posing a serious threat to our present and future generations, and thus to the very survival of humanity.

The responsibility for finding solutions requires a comprehensive approach at all levels. Above all, in order to fight AIDS effectively, partnership between Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the business community, private citizens, HIV-infected people and AIDS activist groups is essential. Communities and Governments should work hand in hand to find a solution. In recognition of this reality, the current Government in my country has formulated a new comprehensive HIV/AIDS policy aimed at creating a conducive environment for enhanced partnership among the Government, the civil society and the international community to fight the disease. In order to mobilize all sectors of the society, the Federal Government of Ethiopia has established a National Council under the chairmanship of the President to monitor the implementation of the programme. For our efforts to succeed, however, international support and assistance are indispensable, and this is also true of all other African countries.

In Africa the AIDS epidemic is now the main cause of death. The socio-economic impact of this situation is widespread and devastating beyond the concerns of health and its immediate ramifications. Recent studies by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the International Labour Organization and other United Nations agencies underscore the wider development implications of HIV/AIDS and how it is reversing hard-won social and economic gains. Life expectancy, which has reached beyond 60 years in some parts of Africa, is predicted to drop to less than 40 by 2010.

As articulated by Security Council resolution 1308 (2000), adopted in July, the socio-economic crisis precipitated by AIDS in Africa is threatening political stability and thereby affecting prospects for peace and security in the continent.

It is against this backdrop that we welcome and sponsor the draft resolution, entitled "Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects", by which the General Assembly will decide to convene a special session on HIV/AIDS in June 2001. We thank the delegation of Ukraine for introducing this draft. We strongly believe that such a special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS will create the necessary platform to mobilize visible and sustained political support at the highest level, leading to enhanced international cooperation and coordination in the fight against the scourge of HIV/AIDS. In addition, given the serious challenge posed by this epidemic, the special session will have a pivotal role in strengthening the follow-up and monitoring mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels. To this end, it is also essential that the special session be taken as a process that builds upon recent international conferences and initiatives.

Finally, it is our hope that the special session will come up with a clear declaration and plan of action, commensurate with the required international action to fight the challenge posed by the AIDS epidemic. In particular, it must have an explicit goal for the reduction of HIV infection rates and prevention targets and articulate the required public-private partnership and the practical measures to be undertaken by the developed countries to work with their pharmaceutical industries and other partners to develop an effective and affordable treatment and vaccine against HIV.

We believe that the special session will provide an opportunity for the international community to exert the necessary effort to address the challenge posed by the AIDS epidemic in the world at large and in Africa in particular. Broader effort is needed if the response is to catch up. For many the answer lies in the international partnership which this special session is expected to promote vigorously.

We listened to strong statements made during the recent Millennium Summit by leaders of key industrialized countries that they are committed to help stamp out the AIDS epidemic. Only yesterday afternoon, France, for one, reiterated its commitment. In the past, such commitments led to rebuilding some countries in Western Europe and East Asia, literally from total destruction. If similar commitments are shown today on a global basis, there is no doubt that the threat of AIDS can be removed from the world.

Mr. Akasaka (Japan): The spread of HIV/AIDS has defied every prediction, and now, with more than 16 million people dead and 34 million people living with HIV/AIDS, the epidemic threatens human security in many parts of the world. It has reached particularly devastating proportions in sub-Saharan Africa, where more than one-tenth of the adult population is infected in 16 countries, and one adult in five is living with HIV/AIDS in seven countries.

AIDS claims the lives of people from all segments of the world — young and old, rich and poor, men, women and children. The lives of the families and more than 11 million AIDS orphans are also victims of the epidemic. Furthermore, in many developing countries the scourge of AIDS is negating the achievements they have made over recent decades through their strenuous efforts for social and economic development. HIV/AIDS takes a particularly heavy toll among the poor. Poverty and gender disparities increase the risk of infection, and the illness in turn leads to greater poverty. This is a vicious cycle that we must break.

The current situation demands a clearer recognition of the gravity of the issue at all levels. It also demands a stronger political leadership to fight the disease by the countries most affected by it. Recent developments in some countries in Africa and in Asia demonstrate that where such political leadership is present, the situation is being stabilized and is improving. But, given the magnitude of the problem, their efforts must be complemented by greater support, cooperation and assistance from the international community, for no country in the world is spared by the epidemic.

At the Okinawa Group of Eight (G-8) Summit meeting held in July this year in Japan, HIV/AIDS, together with other infectious and parasitic diseases, was given priority attention. The participants at the meeting committed themselves to work together with all relevant partners to achieve the critical targets set by the United Nations, including a 25 per cent reduction in the number of HIV/AIDS-infected young people by 2010. This is the target that was agreed on at the Cairo + 5 meeting last year and reaffirmed in the Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit.

Japan, for its part, gives high priority in its official development assistance (ODA) medium-term policy to assistance in the field of HIV/AIDS and other broad population issues. This summer, Japan announced the Okinawa Infectious Diseases Initiative, which builds on what has been achieved under its Global Issues Initiative on Population and AIDS, which was launched in 1994 and will be complete at the end of the Japanese fiscal year 2000 that is, March 2001. Under the new Okinawa Initiative, Japan will target a total of $3 billion to be disbursed over the next five years to enhance assistance for measures to combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious and parasitic diseases, improve public health, develop research networks, support primary and secondary education and provide access to safe water.

Mr. Lelong (Haiti), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In the context of the follow-up to the initiative taken in Okinawa, Japan is currently planning to host an international conference on infectious diseases, also in Okinawa, in December this year. The participants will discuss, among other things, ways and means to translate their political commitments into cooperative activities which will achieve tangible results.

Japan's efforts go beyond what I have just mentioned. As may be recalled, serious attention was given to the issue of HIV/AIDS at the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), held in October 1998. Soon thereafter, Japan announced that it would provide around 90 billion yen, which is about $900 million, in grants over five years, from 1999 to 2004, in such areas as education, health care and medical services in Africa. Thirty-two billion yen in grant aid has been already disbursed so far, with 9.7 billion yen — approximately $97 million — in health and medical services. It is our intention to use a significant portion of these grants in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa.

In the belief that it is useful for developing countries to share their experiences and to learn from each other, Japan has been promoting South-South cooperation as a major approach to its follow-up to TICAD II. Among its many activities in this regard is a seminar on South-South cooperation regarding HIV/AIDS, which the Government of Japan, together with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), held yesterday and the day before yesterday in Tokyo. We are hopeful that participating African countries will benefit from the experiences of others, including Asian and Latin

American countries, and learn how they themselves can promote South-South cooperation in the field of HIV/AIDS.

Given the urgency of the issue, Japan supports the holding of the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS in June next year. We strongly hope that the preparatory process and the special session will be open to all those who can contribute to our endeavour to prevent the spread of the disease, ensure adequate care, and find a cure for people affected by HIV/AIDS. We also hope that the special session will not be given over to negotiation over the text for its own sake, but, rather, that it will be an important process of galvanizing Governments, civil society, the private sector, United Nations organizations, and people affected by AIDS to fulfil the commitments they have made and work together to take concerted action. Japan looks forward to participating actively in the special session as well as in the forthcoming process leading up to it.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): The representative of Ukraine has introduced draft resolution A/55/L.13, of which the Principality of Monaco is a sponsor. We congratulate Mr. Oleh Herasymenko on the professionalism with which he conducted the consultations, with the result that today we are meeting to decide to convene from 25 to 27 June 2001 a special session of the General Assembly to consider acquired immune deficiency in all its aspects. My delegation is pleased that Member States have decided to hold this session next year, because time is of the essence.

AIDS is more than a pandemic. It is a real humanitarian disaster. It is not necessary to list the alarming statistics attesting to the wide spread of the disease. We know them all. On the other hand, it seems crucial to recall that the fight against this grave pandemic is one of the major challenges of the twenty-first century. The international community must do everything to eliminate this threat that weighs on its future and on humanity as a whole. We are particularly aware of this.

The international community has become aware of the urgency of this situation. The Millennium Declaration, in particular paragraphs 19, 20 and 28, Security Council resolution 1308 (2000) and General Assembly resolution 54/238, which were co-sponsored by Monaco, attest to this and are a valuable source of encouragement.

First, I wish to emphasize the very serious situation in which the African continent finds itself, whose population is being relentlessly wiped out. Over the last decade, many African nations have acceded to democracy, undertaken economic reforms, developed their markets, privatized their businesses and stabilized their currencies. These achievements are being seriously jeopardized by the spread of this pandemic. AIDS affects workers, teachers, judges, lawyers, civil servants, the military and all vital national forces. It drives millions of orphans into the streets or, in the best cases, they are left in the care of grandparents or of social services that are often overburdened. It threatens the recent and still fragile stability of certain regions. It runs the risk of extending the already tragic consequences of current conflicts. Fighting AIDS in Africa means working for international peace and security.

I also wish to focus attention on the equally alarming situation in Eastern Europe, where, unfortunately, there has been a large increase in the number of infections, particularly among injecting drug users.

Generally speaking, it seems essential not to isolate the fight against AIDS from the broader context of development and the improvement of health systems. Care and follow-up treatment of the sick must be provided, which means training doctors, nurses and more social workers, as well as opening more clinics and community-based organizations. As a matter of urgency, we must also reduce the incidence of mother-to-child transmission, particularly by the preventive use of antiretroviral drugs, by performing Caesarean section delivery, when necessary, and by not breastfeeding. Progress must also be made in improving diagnostic quality.

The same applies to education, particularly the education of girls and women. It seems essential that girls become aware of the dangers posed by certain types of risky sexual behaviour and that they should know of the available means of protection.

The international community should promptly ensure that access to these preventive means are universal and affordable by supporting specific measures, such as mass consignment of syringes and

condoms, including female condoms, to the most affected and particularly isolated areas.

I would like to focus on the issue of access to medical drugs. I commend the initiative of France, which organized last April a very useful briefing to encourage all steps to promote access to treatment by infected persons in the developing countries. Convening a conference soon on access to drugs will supplement and strengthen the General Assembly's initiative to deal with this tragedy as a whole and to allow for greater access to treatment.

The Principality of Monaco believes that we need to act urgently in this regard, because nothing can be achieved without the effective participation of pharmaceutical companies, which henceforth must allow easier access to drugs and facilitate the production of generic drugs. With the support of the international community, Governments and civil society, we should also ensure follow-up treatment of patients in the field so that important constraints linked to taking drugs can be duly and truly considered. In order to achieve that, easing national and international legislation on patents and intellectual property could be considered, while fully respecting the legitimate interests of pharmaceutical companies, for which research and development of new drugs always represent significant cost and investment.

As the draft resolution rightly states, it seems essential to associate these companies with the preparatory process of the Conference, with a view to establishing realistic deadlines for the manufacture and distribution of relevant drugs. The battle that is about to be won on poliomyelitis, thanks to the commitment of Aventis and the Pasteur Institute certainly shows us the path to be followed in the fight against AIDS.

In accordance with the draft resolution that we will soon adopt, the delegation of Monaco hopes that during the preparatory process the President of the Assembly may assume a leading role and that the draft plan of action to be submitted for consideration by the special session will be realistic and potentially effective.

Similarly, the delegation of Monaco welcomes the view to hold round tables during the special session, which will allow certain aspects of the problem to be dealt with in depth and substantially enrich its work, thanks to the participation not only of States, but also of actors from civil society, particularly organizations of infected persons, and from interested NGOs and the private sector, which, of course, includes the pharmaceutical companies.

Finally, the delegation of Monaco commends the work done by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), which seeks to raise awareness of initiatives of local, national, regional and global organizations. Mindful of the importance and the difficulty of its task, my country believes that this programme should benefit from greater support and redoubled efforts so that coordination between the various institutions devoted to the struggle against this pandemic will be increasingly effective.

The gravity of the situation is such that only real cooperation and the full commitment of all parties concerned can constitute effective weapons against the spread of this pandemic. We must devise a complete strategic plan, including all actors in civil society, particularly the non-governmental organizations. At the same time, we must also establish a specific funding programme, for which the international community will undoubtedly have to provide unprecedented effort.

Alarmed and disquieted, the world expects the United Nations to play a major role. Let us not disappoint the world. We have a few months to prepare for the special session of the general assembly and to ensure its vital success, which now more than ever is essential so that every society, of the North and the South, will be able to contemplate a better future.

Mr. Yusof Ahmad (Malaysia): My delegation welcomes the inclusion of the issue of HIV/AIDS as an agenda item in the General Assembly, as we believe that it is imperative for the United Nations to deliberate on a comprehensive agenda for action on this pandemic.

HIV/AIDS has now become a global problem, no longer just a health crisis, but also a development crisis. Malaysia recognises that HIV/AIDS has devastating effects on the personal lives of people, families, communities and the economies of nations. The disease is also rapidly becoming a security risk that threatens the entire socio-economic structure of a country. It is dimming the prospects of generations and nations, threatening to roll back the development gains of nearly half a century. It is therefore fitting and proper that the fight against HIV/AIDS be mounted on a global scale, as that is the only way in which the

scourge can conceivably be contained and eventually stamped out.

The United Nations took the right step when it adopted the innovative approach of bringing together the various agencies needed to address the many factors of the HIV/AIDS pandemic to form the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). This coordinated effort is indeed essential to maximize United Nations efforts to help countries deal with the impact of HIV/AIDS on households, communities and local economies. My delegation strongly supports the convening next year of a special session of the General Assembly to review the problems of HIV/AIDS in all its aspects. To ensure that the issue can be discussed as comprehensively as possible, my delegation welcomes the participation of all interested and affected parties at both the preparatory stages and the General Assembly session.

Since the HIV/AIDS epidemic first emerged two decades ago, the global impact of the disease has deepened. The available statistics are grave, and become more gruesome when, on closer look, it is revealed that those who are hardest hit by the epidemic are between the ages of 15 and 49, a time when people are in their most productive years of life. The 1.1 million people who have died of HIV/AIDS have left almost 200,000 children orphaned. AIDS is also affecting younger people, with half becoming infected before the age of 25. If left unchecked, the pandemic will not leave much of a future generation to carry on in the world.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has highlighted the close link between poverty and HIV/AIDS, which continues to spread alarmingly in poor regions. The fact is that 95 per cent of AIDS sufferers live in developing countries. AIDS is an impoverishing disease, as it strikes the very people who can develop a country. It is also altering the global economic scenario, as the countries that are suffering from it become poorer, as they have the least capacity to provide treatment for those who become infected. The net result is that the gap between the rich and the poor and the North and the South becomes even wider. There is therefore a need for the wealthier developed countries — out of enlightened self-interest, if not pure altruism — to make available more resources to ameliorate the effects of the disease in the developing countries. This can be done through their economic aid programmes by making available necessary drugs for the treatment of persons infected with HIV. The giant pharmaceutical companies can, and should, also play a part by reducing the price or by allowing compulsory licensing of these life-saving drugs.

HIV/AIDS is also a gender problem, as the number of women infected by the disease is growing faster than that of men. We need to focus on the special needs of women in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment. There is a need for enhanced availability of education, testing, counselling, care and treatment designed to address the specific needs of women and girls. There must be affordable, enhanced medical intervention which is aimed at lessening the risk factors associated with mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS, and which addresses the needs of mothers as well as their newborn.

The initial international combat against HIV/AIDS, which focused on health and medical care, has had limited success. The use of information, education and communication as instruments of prevention has also not been followed by behavioural changes. The project by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) of using a cultural approach to HIV/AIDS so that greater efficiency and sustainability will be reached in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention and care, through a better understanding of people's motivations and reservations, therefore merits our support. This cultural approach will take into account the cultural references and resources of the various populations affected by HIV/AIDS. A greater understanding of the relationship between culture and the spread of highly contagious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, can contribute to more effective strategies to stamp out this dreadful menace.

My delegation believes that the slogan of the World AIDS Campaign — "The Three Ls"; "Listen, learn, live" — is most appropriate, as we should encourage communities around the world to engage in open communication and combat cultural attitudes that are obstacles in the fight against HIV/AIDS. We must break away from the culture of silence and the shying away from frank discussion of sex and drug abuse, when it is evident that openness and sharing can help. Dissemination of information can also eliminate discrimination against people with HIV infection due to ignorance on how it can be transmitted. The social stigma attached to people living with HIV/AIDS, which includes not just the infected persons, but their

families and communities as well, is the greatest barrier to preventing the spread of the disease, as many are reluctant to be tested for HIV or to seek early treatment. For this reason, there is a need to launch a concerted, multi-pronged approach, with a view to sensitizing both Governments and the public and to promote care and education at every level of society.

Like many other countries, Malaysia has not been spared the problem of HIV/AIDS. The official estimate of people with HIV/AIDS in Malaysia is around 34,000 — 96.5 per cent of them men. Of those infected, 76.4 per cent are intravenous drug addicts. While there is already a move to face the epidemic squarely in the face at the highest level, the HIV/AIDS threat is still invisible to the majority of the Malaysian public. Many are still unable to accept that HIV/AIDS is a disease that is among them and that requires urgent attention. The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Malaysia have taken the lead in bringing the issue of HIV/AIDS, which has remained hidden due to its stigma, into the open. They are also working to fight the ignorance and to reduce the stigma and discrimination attached to it. The Malaysian Government will also continue to play its role in providing a suitable policy environment for these NGO initiatives, and to provide as much support as possible. Malaysia recognizes that the fight against HIV/AIDS has to be a joint effort between the Government, NGOs, the private sector and the media.

My delegation is concerned over the rising trend of mother-to-child transmission, infection among young people, sexually transmitted diseases — which signal a danger of increasing HIV infection — connection between mobility, migration and HIV spread, drug use and HIV infection. We are also concerned about the stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, the accessibility and affordability of treatment with anti-retroviral drugs and the potential impact and cost of inadequate interventions.

To address these concerns, Malaysia is active in several regional efforts to combat the HIV pandemic. Malaysia has taken the initiative by calling for a summit of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) on HIV/AIDS, which will take place in Brunei Darussalam in 2001 in conjunction with the seventh ASEAN summit. The main objective of the summit is to mobilize solidarity and peer political support among ASEAN heads of Government to put HIV/AIDS high on the national agenda and to make a commitment to collaborate in inter-country and cross-border issues, as well as to effect an exchange of technical expertise and experiences to address the HIV/AIDS problem.

My delegation would like to urge the international community to support the Secretary-General's call to stop and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. Financial and human resources must be dedicated to that goal. The United Nations system, with its global mission of protecting and promoting human rights, peace and security, is uniquely placed to provide assistance on very often difficult policy matters relating to HIV/AIDS. The role of the United Nations in combating AIDS is particularly pertinent in the context of human rights, since two of the most fundamental human rights are the right to life and the right to health.

Mr. Mmualefe (Botswana): HIV/AIDS is spreading faster than was estimated some 15 years ago. What used to be a personal problem talked about in hushed voices in close-knit family circles is now being discussed in national and international forums. What used to be a lone statement at a lone funeral by a lone village chief in a lone village, decrying the rate at which the young were succumbing to HIV/AIDS and lamenting the fact that babies and the elderly would be left alone in the village, is now a global cry.

> "Having enjoyed peace and security and steady economic growth, we suddenly find our gains in social advancement reversed by this scourge. The economically active population in our society, our most precious resource, is being decimated." (*A/55/PV.5, p. 21*)

That is no longer a cry from a lone African head of State but an international call. What was a decade ago regarded as a serious health crisis is clearly a multi-sectoral international crisis. The discussion of this agenda item today is an acknowledgement of the global nature of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The statistics that have been released by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO) indicate that a total of 34.3 million people worldwide are living with HIV; 18.8 million have died globally, and of these 3.8 million were children. The total number of AIDS orphans is now greater than 13 million. Africa is the most affected continent, with 24.5 million people living

with the virus. The figures in Asia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and some Caribbean island States are equally distressing. These are chilling statistics which call for immediate, effective and coordinated responses.

It is a sad fact that Africa, the cradle of the human race, faces a grim future unless effective measures are taken to lower the incidence of the disease and to mitigate the impact of the scourge. It is even more disheartening that the southern cone of the continent is most affected, with at least one adult in five living with the virus. The southern African region had just emerged from decades-old conflicts and was on the verge of an economic and social revival. That ideal appears distant now. The region's ambitious plans and projects, spearheaded by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), are being undermined by the pandemic.

In my country, close to 35.8 per cent of adults are now infected with HIV. Our life expectancy is calculated to have been reduced from 67 to 47 years. The number of children aged 0 to 9 years is projected to fall by 32 per cent to 40 per cent below a no-AIDS scenario by the year 2010.

In his address to the Millennium Summit, my President, His Excellency Mr. Festus Mogae, confined his statement to the HIV/AIDS scourge. That was done not out of a lack of interest in other global issues but out of an acceptance of the fact that Botswana has an unenviable record of being the country most seriously affected by HIV/AIDS in the whole world. This dubious record was acquired against a backdrop of an economy with growth rates comparable to those of the Asian tigers, impressive human development indexes, a well-functioning multi-party democracy, accountable and transparent governance and an open and well-run economy. Those achievements made over the past 25 years are being significantly eroded by the HIV/AIDS scourge.

The same determination, drive and purposefulness that helped my country build its nationhood and economy from scratch after independence, is being harnessed to fight HIV/AIDS. One of the major strategies to fight HIV/AIDS has been the establishment of a multisectoral National Council which is chaired by the President of Botswana himself. This demonstrates the serious with which the problem is being treated. At the executive level, there is a National AIDS Coordinating Agency headed by a senior official to implement anti-HIV/AIDS programmes. The principal strategy is information, education and communication. This has been combined with concerted efforts to destigmatize HIV/AIDS.

The focus of our HIV/AIDS strategy is on the reduction of risk and vulnerability and on mitigation of socio-economic impact. Mitigation of the impact is done primarily through community-based care programmes and through clinical management of opportunistic infections, while risk and vulnerability reduction takes place through community education.

The Government, in partnership with other stakeholders, has initiated a number of interventions such as prevention of mother-to-child transmission through the use of anti-retroviral drugs; voluntary testing and counselling centres in major settlements; house-to-house counselling; care of orphans; management of sexually transmitted diseases; information, education and behaviour-change communication; HIV/AIDS research; and multisectoral response and institutional strengthening.

Considerable resources have been diverted from development projects towards the fight against HIV/AIDS. So far, the Government funds 80 per cent of all HIV/AIDS prevention and care activities. This is certainly not sustainable. We will therefore need an infusion of resource from outside the country. Botswana is, in this regard, grateful to Governments, the United Nations system, private organizations and individuals and non-governmental organizations that have established partnerships with us in the fight against AIDS.

My country takes solace in the fact that AIDS in Africa was chosen as the theme for the United Nations Security Council meeting on 10 January 2000 — the first occasion on which that body dealt with a developmental issue. We look forward to the forthcoming special session to review the problem of HIV/AIDS in all its aspects. It is our conviction that its convening, on such short notice, is an affirmation of the fact that, for millions of people, even one more day of action delayed is one too many. We hope to see, emerging from the special session, commitment and unity of purpose to heed the cry for help — help that is required now. Developing countries cannot, on their own, deal with the plethora of actions required for intervention, such as those relating to education and

sensitization, testing and counselling, adolescent reproductive health, the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, the acquisition of retroviral drugs and medication and the provision of care for the affected population. This is the message that my Government will be taking to the special session. Our hopes lie in the recommendations of the session and their immediate implementation.

The facts are available; the grim picture has been highlighted and discussed in this Hall and in Copenhagen, Beijing, Cairo and Durban. The special session on HIV/AIDS will fail humanity if it does not deliver on the undertakings that were made by our leaders in the Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Sun (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to thank Ukraine and the other sponsoring countries for submitting draft resolution A/55/L.13. Sharing in the spirit and supporting the letter of the draft, the Republic of Korea has decided to join the other sponsors.

The accelerating spread of the human immunodeficiency virus and the consequent increase in the cases of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome have led to an unprecedented epidemic of global proportions. Statistics show that nearly 36 million people are living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. It is noteworthy that 95 per cent of HIV-infected people are living in developing countries, particularly in the sub-Saharan region, which alone accounts for 23 million infected people. Attention should be given to the view that the accelerated pace of globalization may be contributing to the uncontrolled spread of the disease.

HIV/AIDS has been reaching far beyond the realm of health and has enormous human, social, development and security ramifications. AIDS has become a disease associated with poverty, ignorance and gender discrimination, and it is having deplorable effects on poor children and women. It is distressing how HIV/AIDS has developed into a threat to social security, exacerbating inequalities and undermining sustainable development in affected countries, particularly developing countries.

In addressing such problems, we need to overcome two major challenges — one scientific and the other financial. The world is in desperate need of a vaccine against HIV. However, it is discouraging to note that an absolute majority of the resources have been diverted to research on and treatment for AIDS, rather than used to create a vaccine. On the other hand, according to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) report to the Security Council last July, beating back the epidemic in Africa alone would cost $3 billion, and the contributions from donors are far below the levels needed to cover the cost.

I firmly believe that the multifaceted challenges will be properly tackled only with a genuine partnership between the developed and developing countries, and between the public and private sectors. Among other such partnerships, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, formed in 1999, has been recognized as a successful example of public and private cooperation in finding a global solution to a global problem. The Framework for Action of the International Partnership Against HIV/AIDS in Africa is another example of such collaboration and I am confident that it will provide a solid basis to move forward with the global endeavour. Furthermore, it is encouraging to note that a number of world-renowned pharmaceutical companies are moving towards reducing the prices of AIDS drugs for States affected by the disease. Yet partnerships cannot be strengthened without strong public support. The fear of stigma associated with HIV/AIDS has often created silence for various reasons. The vicious circle of silence around the disease must, however, be broken if we are to overcome one of the worst human tragedies of our time. It is vital that proper information on HIV and AIDS be widely disseminated. In this regard, I find it extremely timely that "Breaking the Silence on HIV/AIDS" was chosen as the theme of the United Nations Development Programme's Fourth Annual Race Against Poverty.

HIV/AIDS has now become a top priority on the agenda of the United Nations system. This is not surprising, given the role to be played by the United Nations in formulating and coordinating a comprehensive strategy for action. The final documents adopted by recent special sessions relating, respectively, to population, women and social development, served as a basis for all stakeholders to take specific action against HIV/AIDS.

In a bold decision, the Millennium Declaration set a target to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015 in the context of development and poverty eradication. I appreciate the fact that the United

Nations has taken the lead in combating the scourge of the AIDS pandemic by, among other things, raising public awareness and addressing the socio-economic and development implications. In particular, UNAIDS has done a commendable job in coordinating and supporting efforts to address HIV/AIDS in all relevant forums. It is my sincere hope that UNAIDS will continue to strengthen its role of coordinating international undertakings in close collaboration with governmental and non-governmental partners.

I also welcome the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, which recommended that the General Assembly take the necessary steps to address HIV/AIDS-related problems.

Before closing, I would like briefly to touch upon the current situation surrounding HIV/AIDS in my country. Despite the fact that it currently has a relatively small number of infected people, we are concerned about the trend of rising figures. Faced with this challenge, my Government has taken steps primarily to focus on enhancing education about and awareness of HIV/AIDS to promote voluntary counselling and to work with civil society and volunteers.

The Republic of Korea has also provided assistance to developing countries by sharing its experiences in addressing problems associated with HIV/AIDS and, more broadly, in the promotion of reproductive health care, and it will continue to do so in the future.

Through the Millennium Declaration, we resolved to meet a time-bound target: to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by the year 2015. I am confident that the special session to be held next year will provide an important platform for achieving our common goal. Considering the time constraints before the session, we must carry out the preparatory process in the most efficient manner possible. The Republic of Korea will do its share to ensure the success of the special session.

Mr. Donigi (Papua New Guinea): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the countries of the Pacific Islands Forum represented here in New York: Australia, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Papua New Guinea. It is with a keen sense of the importance of this issue that our delegations have asked to speak on agenda item 179 on "Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects".

The growing HIV/AIDS pandemic is fast becoming the most serious health issue facing the international community in the coming century. Yet it is much more than that. The scale and spread of this disease have made it a major development issue — indeed the most pressing one for those countries which suffer its effects most acutely. In those countries where it is most rife, it threatens to undermine and reverse many of the development gains of the last four decades. Such devastating social and economic effects threaten to make it a serious security issue as well. Above all, the epidemic has produced a humanitarian disaster of frightening proportions. Nearly 36 million people are currently living with the disease; another 19 million are thought to have died from it. At the same time, infection rates have accelerated in some countries. At present, an estimated 11,000 people become infected every day. There were over 13 million AIDS orphans at the start of this year, many of whom were themselves infected.

Nowhere are the effects of this terrible disease more profoundly felt than in sub-Saharan Africa. That region is currently host to two thirds of HIV-infected people and has lost over 14 million of its inhabitants to the disease. Yet the spread and effects of HIV/AIDS are not the exclusive concern of any one community, country or region. It is a global problem that demands global efforts to combat it. The Security Council's decision to hold an open meeting on the subject in January of this year was an important step in this direction. Our delegations support the draft resolution presented under this item, contained in document A/55/L.13, and particularly welcome the decision to hold a special session of the General Assembly in June next year. We call on all Member States and relevant agencies to begin preparations immediately to ensure its success.

The Declaration to which our leaders committed themselves at the recent Millennium Summit established the target of halting, and then reversing, the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. The success of next year's special session will be crucial in achieving this aim. It must be focused to produce ambitious but achievable goals, underpinned by concrete proposals

for action. Financial and technical resources must be freed up to help bolster national capacities to combat the disease in the most affected regions. Health systems must be strengthened to prevent its spread and treat its victims, and ways must be sought to increase the access of victims in developing countries to affordable and effective medicines.

Damage control is not enough, however. With HIV/AIDS, as with all diseases, prevention is infinitely preferable to cure. There is considerable evidence to suggest that political will and early preventive measures are essential to prevent the exponential spread of the disease. Public education campaigns should be vigorously pursued, public debate should be open and informed, and access to condoms, disposable needles, and detection and treatment of sexually transmitted infections should be made universal. Involving people living with HIV/AIDS within affected communities in the development of these strategies is another crucial component for success.

The spread of HIV/AIDS is also of concern in our own region. While the number of those infected remains low in relative terms, infection rates are of increasing concern, particularly in Melanesia and some parts of Polynesia. Exact figures have been hampered by a lack of reliable research and by low public awareness of the issue in the region. What is more, our region is affected by a number of socio-economic, health and educational factors which make it vulnerable to the future spread of the disease.

We urge the international community to include the Pacific in its efforts to combat this disease. In particular, there is an urgent need to gather accurate and comprehensive health and demographic data in the region and to assist the development of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes. We also feel that the continuation of a representative position of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in the region is imperative.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is nothing short of a crisis. Without urgent and effective action, its dimensions will continue to expand. We have no time to lose. The international community must quickly muster its will and resources to tackle this daunting problem at both the national and international levels.

Mr. Huang Xuegi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS is turning into a global public health and social problem. At present a total of 34.3 million people are infected. Not only are the patients and their families suffering greatly, but the countries concerned are also shouldering heavy social burdens and grave economic consequences. HIV/AIDS has triggered crises in some countries, particularly African countries. Its impact on their poverty-elimination efforts, economic growth and social progress is hard to estimate. If urgent measures are not taken, not only will the gains of economic development and progress achieved over a long period of time be wiped out, but their development prospects will also be dimmed.

No country in the world will be so fortunate as to escape the scourge of HIV/AIDS, which is the common enemy of all humanity. Curbing its spread and reducing its evil effects will require the joint efforts and coordinated actions of all Governments, international organizations and people of all circles.

Humanity is not helpless in the face of HIV/AIDS. Such international organizations as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as some national Governments, have already taken considerable steps. As a result, in some countries HIV/AIDS infection rates have been reduced. However, it is disturbing that the global spread of the disease has increased sharply.

Efforts to reverse this trend still face many practical obstacles. Special attention needs to be given to the question of how to resolve the difficulties faced by the developing countries, where 90 per cent of the HIV/AIDS-infected population lives. In these circumstances it is all the more imperative to mobilize more international forces to work together to contain the spread of the pandemic.

Combating HIV/AIDS requires a comprehensive policy. The attention and personal involvement of senior government leaders are also very important. As regards potential strategies, while vigorous research should be conducted in the areas of cure and prevention — including vaccines and drugs — people at the grassroots levels should also be effectively mobilized to take preventive measures. It is also necessary to resolve the relevant social problems.

A positive impetus from relevant international organizations plays an important role. We commend WHO and UNAIDS for their efforts to mobilize the international community, including all Governments, to

make political commitments, provide financial support and take measures to help developing countries carry out prevention and control, as well as to lower drug prices so that people infected with HIV/AIDS can receive drug treatment.

It is very timely that, by resolution 54/283, the General Assembly decided to convene a special session on HIV/AIDS. This session will provide an opportunity for all countries to consider fully various AIDS-related policy issues, exchange experiences, sum up lessons learned, raise society's awareness, strengthen political will and gather resources in order to jointly seek an effective strategy to overcome HIV/AIDS.

In order for the special session to be a success, preparations should begin early. We encourage representatives from all fields to offer advice and suggestions that can aid Member States in formulating policies.

HIV/AIDS is also a major challenge to China's economic and social development. The Chinese Government has taken and is taking various measures to deal with the spread of HIV/AIDS infection. Our policy on this problem is to focus on prevention, advocacy and education; tackle the symptoms and root causes in an integrated manner; and establish a controlled preventive system based on Government leadership, multisectoral cooperation and the joint participation of society at large. To control the spread of HIV/AIDS, we have widely disseminated information about how it can be prevented and cured.

We attach importance to, and are ready to participate actively in, the special session and its preparatory work. We will work with all countries to ensure the substantive success of the session.

Mrs. Browne (Saint Kitts and Nevis): On behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), I have the honour to speak on agenda item 179: "Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in all its aspects". We welcome the debate on this item, as it allows for sharp focus on an issue of increasing concern, which demands urgent global attention. We commend the delegation of Ukraine for the leadership demonstrated in producing the important draft resolution before the Assembly.

The recent statistics on HIV/AIDS have confirmed that the AIDS epidemic has escalated to global proportions. The most recent relevant global estimates of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO) on the epidemic reveal that about 34.3 million people are living with the virus and that in the next decade, but for a miracle, most of them will die. However, what is even more alarming is that about 95 per cent of those infected with the AIDS virus live in the developing world, where poverty, inadequate health systems and limited resources for prevention and care increase the spread of the virus.

The reality is that the disease does not recognize national boundaries. This devastating pandemic is ravaging the small island States of the Caribbean, where, according to the statistics, several countries have already recorded transmission rates that are among the highest in the world, outside sub-Saharan Africa. The HIV/AIDS crisis in the Caribbean has assumed dangerous proportions, since 360,000 adults and children are living with the virus. From the beginning of the epidemic to the end of 1999, an estimated 160,000 persons in the Caribbean region have died from this dreaded disease. Stigmatization and a long incubation period are among the factors that make detection of the prevalence rate of the disease difficult to obtain in any population. In the Caribbean this difficulty is compounded by inadequate epidemiological systems, indicating that the present statistics may not even be reflecting the gravity of our situation.

The epidemic has cast a sinister shadow over the global landscape. The enormous challenge that confronts us should now be urgently addressed through intensified, coordinated approaches at the international level. The AIDS epidemic now assumes a prominent position on the agenda of an increasing number of international organizations, and we are pleased with the effort the United Nations has made to raise awareness and mobilize political will and international funding, as well as to provide much needed technical advice. The international community has become increasingly sensitized to the need for multisectoral and intergovernmental approaches. The WHO-led campaign has now been supplemented by a multi-agency approach of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). I commend the UNAIDS Secretariat and its sponsoring organizations for their active support, commitment and initiative in the global struggle against the AIDS epidemic.

In his millennium report the Secretary-General challenged world leaders to work assiduously towards stemming the spread of the deadly disease, while setting specific preventive targets. He exhorted the international community to work towards achieving this goal by 2015. We are encouraged by the leadership role that the United Nations has taken in the battle against AIDS by forging closer partnerships with stakeholders in the business community, including pharmaceutical companies, as well as non-governmental organizations and international financial and trade institutions.

The international community should be further mobilized to confront this challenge to reverse the trends of the AIDS epidemic. CARICOM welcomes the draft resolution, which calls, inter alia, for the convening, as a matter of urgency, of a special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS from 25 to 27 June 2001. In view of the gravity of the problem with which we are confronted, every effort should be made to ensure the successful outcome of this session. It is our hope that the special session will enjoy participation at the highest level and will receive the political impetus and the commitment necessary to ensure its success.

As we attempt to move forward in the twenty-first century, CARICOM member States are constantly reminded of the unprecedented challenges of the AIDS epidemic, which threatens to undermine our future economic and social developmental gains. We share the view that the AIDS pandemic is among the combustible mix of social dilemmas that plague the Caribbean in this millennial era. The effects of this deadly disease are indeed multifaceted, impacting the infected individuals and the affected households on the one hand, and our whole developmental thrust on the other. While attempting, therefore, to grapple with the reality that the AIDS epidemic is touching every sector of society, with enormous human, social and economic ramifications, we are equally convinced that one has to dispense with the view that HIV/AIDS should be confined to the health portfolio. Moreover, the global community has been informed by the Security Council of the security dimension of HIV/AIDS and the critical importance of including it on the international agenda.

CARICOM member States are equally disturbed that the AIDS epidemic in the region has the potential, as has been sadly demonstrated in Africa, to claim the lives of a large segment of the most productive members of our labour force. Seventy per cent of the cases diagnosed are between the ages of 15 and 44, with 50 per cent between 25 and 34. This phenomenal factor underscores the serious threat of the epidemic to sustainable development within the Caribbean region.

In addition to the accompanying human suffering, AIDS tears at the very fabric of our family and community life. It exacerbates existing high levels of poverty and threatens social stability. In the face of all this, CARICOM has not remained complacent. We are committed to investing the required resources to ensure the development and implementation of national strategic plans to stem the spread of this scourge.

CARICOM member States will persist with national and strategic initiatives and will continue to seek out possibilities for more comprehensive, high-level approaches that will have a more substantive effect on reversing the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS.

CARICOM pledges its full support in the initiative before the Assembly, and will be actively involved in the preparatory process for the special session. I call upon member States and all sectors of the international community to join in the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Finally, I reiterate the admonition of CARICOM's spokesperson on health issues, the Honourable Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Mr. Denzil Douglas:

> "We have to act now to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in our communities. We have to increase and improve the quality of our response against HIV/AIDS if we are to save the lives and improve the quality of life of those who already have the dreaded disease".

Mr. Naidu (Fiji): My delegation fully endorses the statement made by Mr. Peter Donigi of Papua New Guinea on behalf of the countries of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Fiji is not immune to the global invasion of HIV/AIDS. Although 70 per cent of the 34.3 million infected victims are in Africa, HIV/AIDS is bigger than Africa. It is for this reason that HIV/AIDS has been pronounced by the Security Council to be an international security issue.

Fiji now records 59 officially reported AIDS cases. There is no telling the exact number of HIV/AIDS victims in Fiji today. Our limited facilities,

expertise and knowledge, the different quality of reporting systems and the lack of best-practice protocols are part of the problem. Those few who have passed away from HIV/AIDS have died under sad or tragic circumstances, due to the continuing stigmatization and associated myths that can be dispelled with only targeted and global advocacy.

Fiji, nonetheless, is not resting on its laurels because of the seemingly slow pace at which HIV/AIDS is setting upon us. On the contrary, the Fiji Government has in place a national task force for AIDS and, through relevant appropriate line ministries, as well as key stakeholders, including civil society, it is relentlessly pursuing the awareness education programme to tackle the problem.

Fiji acknowledges the work of UNAIDS in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) offices in Fiji. The joint efforts are advancing networking in advocacy, youth awareness and activities, peer education and counselling, research and study, and are projecting suitable programmes in addressing HIV/AIDS. These efforts pursue cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary avenues that promise positive outcomes. The joint efforts of the United Nations agencies have catalyzed national and regional pilot studies and conferences.

The first Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases Conference, held in Fiji in February 1999, gave a high profile focus to HIV/AIDS in the region. In particular, it served as the platform for youth delegates to formulate a statement of specific actions that young people can engage in, including peer education, legal protection and life skills.

Some of these works are being undertaken by relevant non-governmental organizations, such as the AIDS Task Force in Fiji, or interdenominational church groups, such as the Churches AIDS and Related Diseases, Pastoral Care and Education, Inc. (CAPE), which attest to the need to approach HIV/AIDS in a more holistic way.

The Human Rights HIV/AIDS Advisory Council, based at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, is coordinating the three study programmes that were piloted in the South Pacific.

The President returned to the Chair.

The United Nations needs to be commended for recognizing the work on HIV/AIDS that is being conducted in the Pacific, however small in relative terms compared to other regions. In giving Maire Bopp Dupont one of the four awards for breaking the silence on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations paves the way for a strengthened partnership with the Pacific peoples, Governments and non-governmental organizations, and in so doing the Pacific, including Fiji, commits itself to the "big noise" slogan to arrest the spread and invasion of HIV/AIDS.

My delegation finds the debate on the culture of peace in this Assembly this week to be a timely and critical event in our consideration of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Through Mary's testimony, the Pacific advocates the inculcation of peace and tolerance in the minds of our peoples and children through education and through family. Prevention, tolerance, support and care are immediate values that we can foster now in adding to that big noise.

Again, we are experiencing a seemingly insurmountable health, development and security problem which is contracted in developing nations and for which medicine, research and finance are in the hands of the developed nations. We must not yield to this scenario with feelings of helplessness. On a positive note, we can be more effective by contributing in our own small ways at home to building strong, holistic partnerships in our own countries to complement international partnerships. Our collective efforts can then make a difference. In this regard, Fiji wishes to acknowledge the contribution of Australia in HIV/AIDS work in the Pacific. The recent decision to commit $200 million to assisting partner countries in the Asia/Pacific region in the next six years is highly appreciated.

To signal my Government's increased dedication to this noble cause, Fiji is co-sponsoring the draft resolution now before this Assembly. Its adoption by consensus can generate the political will of Member States for the preparations for, convening of and critical follow-ups to the special session on HIV/AIDS in 2001. My Government is confident that the special session will augment all efforts and resources to raise the levels of political, social and resource commitments to an unprecedented scale that can effectively halt this pandemic, which has been categorized as the greatest human security risk of modern times.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Ms. Pohjankokka (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the head of the delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. He regretted not being able to be present to participate in this important discussion, due to his urgent mission in Europe.

During one of the most heated debates some weeks ago in this very room, a Foreign Minister from Africa compared HIV/AIDS to the plague that devastated Europe many centuries ago and asked an unpleasant question: How long will we have to wait until we find a joint strategy to fight this deadly plague? We at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) appreciate the fact that Ambassador Richard Holbrooke took a very courageous and visionary step at the Security Council some time ago, declaring HIV/AIDS a threat to world peace and security.

That is exactly what it is. And only a month ago in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, some 53 African Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the IFRC, during the fifth Pan African Conference, decided that enough is enough. The way the world failed to see the danger of the Nazi virus in the early 1930s, which led to the Holocaust and the loss of some 50 million people during the Second World War, is the same way we sadly wasted the first 20 years after the HIV virus started sweeping the world and Africa in particular. All the tragic statistics are now well publicized, so let me say a few words on how the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement plans to continue after the important meeting in Ouagadougou.

The IFRC and its 53 African Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, with over 2 million volunteers, will start immediately implementing a new strategic initiative called the African Red Cross and Red Crescent Health Initiative, together with all health ministries in the continent and all major United Nations partners. This 10-year plan of action identifies all major health problems in Africa, HIV/AIDS being the most urgent to deal with.

In order to change the scope and speed of this killing machine, the IFRC, recognizing that the war against HIV/AIDS will be won or lost at the local level, plans to concentrate its efforts on working ever more closely with the local communities. Actions will be focused first on advocacy to convince public health authorities and political leaders to declare HIV/AIDS an emergency and give it due priority. High profile attention needs to target unsafe sexual behaviours, discrimination and stigmatization of people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as gender differences in vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

Second, we must build and apply knowledge by ensuring that Red Cross/Red Crescent members, volunteers and staff are knowledgeable on HIV/AIDS prevention and that they apply this to their own lives. We must promote youth peer education in and out of schools as a way of having a significant impact in terms of attitude and behaviour changes regarding safe sex.

Third, condoms must be distributed and their proper use promoted. This activity, currently undertaken by 12 Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, aims at increasing availability and accessibility, in particular in rural areas, where Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteers serve as valued outreach condom distributors and promoters. What needs to be established is a pull mechanism that can create demand at a big enough scale and lead to behavioural change.

Fourth, home care must be supported for people living with HIV/AIDS. The focus is on training family members in basic care, first aid and support techniques.

Fifth, we must advocate towards community authorities on behalf of orphans. In collaboration with other partners, we will assist communities in strengthening their traditional assistance to address the problems of millions of orphans.

Sixth, we must promote voluntary non-remunerated blood donation. Thirty-three African Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies are involved today in this programme; three of them manage blood banks. Since 5 to 10 per cent of HIV infections are still caused by transfusing contaminated blood, additional efforts and investments will be made to prevent it.

Seventh, we must promote the development and availability of voluntary counselling and HIV testing.

I wish to take this opportunity to state our great appreciation to the several African Governments concerned, and particularly to the Burkina Faso

delegation, for their active support in endorsing the Ouagadougou Declaration and recognizing it within the United Nations system, where it is now registered under document A/55/480. Further, we highly value the recognition by the Governments in taking note of the Ouagadougou Declaration in draft resolution A/55/L.13. We consider this a meaningful step in building our strategic partnerships. We look forward to continuing further our cooperation with the national plans.

Here I would like to inform the Assembly that, in an act of solidarity, all major donor Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have expressed the commitment to support their colleagues from Africa in this difficult and long war that we all are going to fight. We know that a quick solution is not on the horizon. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is preparing for a long and difficult war against the disease. We hope that the Governments and all our major United Nations partners will support us.

In conclusion, let me go back to history. The Nazi virus was defeated only when a worldwide coalition was created to stop it and exterminate it. If we know today that in the coming years HIV/AIDS will kill more people than all wars and natural disasters have in the last 50 years, the time has come to form this coalition and start the counter-attack with all the financial, scientific and medical weapons we have to hand. As the IFRC President, Dr. Astrid Heiberg, has said,

> "Ten years from now we might be able to look back and say 'We made Africa a healthier place to live.'"

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/55/L.13. I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Jin Yongjian (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): With regard to the adoption of draft resolution A/55/L.13, the attention of the General Assembly is drawn to the programme budget implications statement submitted by the Secretary-General at the 100th plenary meeting of the fifty-fourth session of the Assembly, contained in document A/C.5/54/65.

In its report to the fifty-fifth session contained in document A/55/529, the Fifth Committee decided to inform the General Assembly that, subject to the provisions for the operation and use of the contingency fund, implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/283 could, *inter alia*, require $1,628,900 over and above the resources in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

Provisions have thus been made for the following: first, the convening of the special session on the basis of two simultaneous meetings a day, plus evening meetings as required; secondly, the strengthening of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) secretariat in New York and Geneva for backstopping the process of the special session, coordinating with the United Nations Secretariat and the UNAIDS co-sponsors, the substantive preparations of the special session, including ensuring inputs from the country and regional levels, and the preparation of a background document for the special session containing an overall assessment of progress to date in the global effort to combat HIV/AIDS, an analysis of major gaps and constraints, an overview of remaining challenges, lessons learned and best practices, as well as the formulation of recommendations for the future; thirdly, public information programmes and coverage of the special session; and fourthly, requirements of central support services and protocol services.

The adoption of draft resolution A/55/L.13, therefore, will not give rise to additional requirements over and above the $1,628,900 contained in the programme budget implications statement submitted at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

By operative paragraph 8, however, the Assembly would also decide to convene, within the framework of the preparatory process for the special session, open-ended informal consultations of the plenary, chaired by the President of the General Assembly, to undertake, as appropriate, preparations for the special session, including elaboration of a draft declaration of commitment and other relevant documents for consideration during the special session, to further address the modalities and other organizational matters of the special session, with a view to submitting proposals for final decision by the Assembly, and to organize other relevant activities to contribute to the preparation for the special session.

Further, by operative paragraph 14 of the draft resolution, the President of the General Assembly would still make recommendations, for consideration by Member States during the preparatory process, for final decision by the Assembly as soon as possible, but not later than 2 March 2001, as to the form of the involvement of civil society actors, in particular associations of people living with HIV/AIDS, non-governmental organizations and the business sector, including pharmaceutical companies, in the special session and, to the extent possible, in the preparatory process.

Once a final decision is taken on the preparatory process and the special session itself — its structure, participation and coverage — and should they require additional resources, the Secretary-General would revert to this issue.

In the meantime, bearing in mind operative paragraph 15 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would endeavour to make every effort to ensure mobilization of resources to a trust fund to be established to ensure the full and active participation of all States, including the least developed countries, in the preparatory process for the special session.

The President: Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since its introduction the following countries have become sponsors: Benin, Botswana, Ethiopia, Finland, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Iceland, Jamaica, Kenya, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.13. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/55/L.13 was adopted (resolution 55/13).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 179.

Agenda item 61

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft resolution (A/55/L.19)

The President: We shall now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.19, entitled "Amendment to rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.19?

Draft resolution A/55/L.19 was adopted (resolution 55/14).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 61.

Agenda item 21

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/184)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.21)

The President: I call on the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.21.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) *(spoke in French)*: As Canada currently chairs the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS), I am very pleased and honoured to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.21, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States".

I am especially pleased to announce that the following countries have joined Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Venezuela in sponsoring the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Japan, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and the United States of America.

(*spoke in English*)

Draft resolution A/55/L.21 includes several important new elements.

It welcomes the upcoming Summit of the Americas, to be held in April 2001 in Canada, where we will welcome leaders from across the hemisphere.

It acknowledges the declaration by the OAS of 2001 as the Inter-American Year of the Child and the Adolescent, and welcomes related efforts in the Americas to address emerging issues for children.

Finally, it notes with satisfaction information exchanges between the OAS and United Nations missions in the hemisphere and recognizes the work of the OAS in the promotion of democracy in the Americas.

It is especially fitting that Canada should introduce this draft resolution this year, the tenth anniversary of our membership in the OAS. Since joining the organization, Canada has increased its engagement with regional partners in all areas, from free trade to drug control to human security.

As a regional agency of the United Nations, the OAS shares the fundamental goals of promoting peace and security and ensuring respect for human rights. It is therefore important that the two organizations work closely together to develop and strengthen activities to address the multifaceted challenges facing the citizens of this hemisphere.

Such collaboration has developed impressively, including cooperation on activities such as electoral observation, disaster management, refugee protection and human rights.

Leaders at the Summit of the Americas will endorse initiatives that will increase the already substantial work being done by the OAS in these areas. We must therefore intensify efforts to identify areas where cooperation between the OAS and the United Nations can be strengthened.

(*spoke in French*)

While resolutions such as these are — in substance — somewhat pro forma, we are confident that continued close cooperation between the member States of our two organizations will result in real, beneficial impact on the quality of life of their peoples.

Lastly, I should like to express our hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by the Assembly without a vote.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) *(spoke in French)*: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) on agenda item 21, which relates to cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS).

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the EU — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as Norway, a country of the European Free Trade Association, align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union noted with particular interest the content of the Secretary-General's most recent report on this question. Naturally, the European Union welcomes the fact that the two organizations are able to maintain and develop close relations with each other. Improved coordination of the operations undertaken is likely to reinforce the real mutual impact of the efforts in the region to promote sustainable peace and development. Among the most significant joint actions, the European Union would emphasize, following the completion of the mandate of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) in March 2000, the continuation of regular consultations between the OAS and the United Nations Civilian Support Mission for Haiti (MICAH). In this regard, the European Union reaffirms its full support for the efforts of the OAS to attempt to find a solution to the serious political crisis that Haiti is experiencing.

The European Union would like to acknowledge the decisive role played by the OAS in preventing and resolving conflicts. Useful lessons could undoubtedly be drawn from this experience for other regions of the world. We would like to underline in particular the important role the OAS has played and should continue to play in connection with the elections in Peru. The EU also applauds the mediating role played by the OAS in settling the dispute between Honduras and Nicaragua.

The European Union also recognizes the role played by the OAS in developing a number of regional and inter-regional projects.

Obviously, the European Union intends to continue its own cooperation efforts with both the OAS and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean whenever the opportunity arises; hence the Union's financial participation in 1998 and 1999 in

an OAS programme to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters in Central America and the Caribbean. The European Union also fosters, either directly or through its Member States, sustained and productive cooperation with the OAS anti-drug unit. Moreover, the European Union has developed very positive cooperation with the OAS in the sphere of election monitoring. Another example of coordination was noted in Guatemala, where the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) coordinated closely with, among others, the OAS and the European Union in the monitoring of Guatemala's general elections in 1999.

In accordance with its own policy regarding relations between the United Nations and regional organizations, the European Union expresses its wish for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the OAS, and it will continue to follow this matter closely.

Mr. Akasaka (Japan): Japan has long stressed the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. We thus heartily welcome efforts to promote cooperative relations between the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations, as described in the report of the Secretary-General and as reflected in the draft resolution which the Permanent Representative of Canada introduced. My delegation is very pleased to sponsor the draft resolution.

Guatemala and Haiti are the two most salient cases of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAS.

Permit me first to touch on the cooperation of the two organizations in Guatemala. Thanks in no small part to the information provided by the OAS, the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) was able to contribute to the peace process by supervising the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants into society. The referendum on constitutional reform was held under its supervision in May last year and the general election was held last November. Recognizing the importance of the democratization process, Japan sent six observers to help monitor the election in November and made a financial contribution for MINUGUA's election-monitoring activities. Japan supports the current and future work of MINUGUA in monitoring the peace process and implementing tax, judicial and social reforms. Japan therefore supports the extension of MINUGUA's mandate until 31 December 2001, as recommended in the Secretary-General's report.

Let me now turn to the situation in Haiti. Japan appreciates the activities of the joint United Nations/Organization of American States International Civilian Mission in Haiti and the United Nations Civilian Support Mission for Haiti in promoting democracy in that country. In order to enhance democracy and stability in Haiti, Japan made a financial contribution and sent observers to monitor both the presidential election and the general and local elections held in 1995. It has also contributed $3 million to the United Nations fund for the establishment of a national police force in Haiti. Japan is thus all the more disappointed with the situation in the wake of the general and local elections held in May and July this year, and urges the Government of Haiti to make the greatest possible efforts to advance the democratization process.

I would like to take this opportunity to refer to some of the recent instances in which Japan, as a permanent observer of the OAS since 1973, has cooperated with the Organization of American States.

First, let me refer to the democratization process in Peru, which Japan believes has important implications for the political stability and economic development not only of that country, but of the entire Andean region. In accordance with that view, Japan has contributed $200,000 in support of the monitoring activities of the OAS for this year's presidential and legislative elections in Peru, and has also sent election observers to participate in those activities.

The second case of cooperation relates to the OAS Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). Recognizing the importance of the activities of CICAD to eradicate both the demand for and supply of drugs, Japan has thus far contributed a total of $1,880,000 to the various projects of the Commission.

Thirdly, the elimination of landmines that were laid during the civil wars in many parts of Central America has been a concern of Japan. Eliminating the landmines is important for the repatriation of farmers and rural resettlement, which are prerequisites for the economic recovery process. Since 1992 Japan's contribution to the OAS for this purpose amounts to $340,000.

In conclusion, I once again commend the OAS for its efforts to strengthen peace and security and to achieve economic and social stability throughout the region. I also confirm Japan's full support for the activities of the OAS for the further development of Latin America and the Caribbean region, and urge the international community to lend its support to its efforts.

Mr. Soares (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I had the privilege and joy of holding the office of Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS) for 10 years. Therefore, it is a great honour for me to speak as a member of the Brazilian delegation on an item that is very familiar to us: cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

This item was first introduced in 1982 for annual consideration. Recently it has been considered every two years. We are encouraged that the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAS grows steadily.

The OAS is the oldest active regional organization. It grew from seeds sown by the First International Conference of American States in 1890 and assumed its current form in 1948. The United Nations Charter recognizes in Chapter VIII the contribution that regional arrangements can make to the maintenance of international peace and security.

There is complementarity between various areas of the two organizations; for example, between the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization (WHO), in the work of the OAS Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and in the exchange of information within the framework of the implementation of the United Nations/Organization of American States International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) and the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA).

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean continues to make an important contribution to development, particularly in the fields of regional integration, statistics and the status of women. In turn, the concerted action of member States and such bodies of the Organization of American States (OAS) as the Inter-American Commission of Women, which has been in existence since the beginning of the twentieth century, and the Inter-American Children's Institute contribute to promoting the status of women, alleviating the problems faced by children and young people, eradicating extreme poverty, raising peoples' levels of education and making new technologies widely accessible.

The OAS does work that very often complements the activities of the United Nations — for example, through the adoption of the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions, adopted last year, which makes it mandatory for member countries to transmit to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms annual data on purchases and sales of conventional weaponry.

American States are also carrying out pioneering activities that are still under consideration in the universal Organization. Such is the case with regard to the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and other Related Materials and the CICAD "Model Regulations for the Control of the International Movement of Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition", which will be important elements for discussion at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is to be held in New York in 2001.

In the same vein, mention should be made of the efforts in the OAS to develop an institutional framework for a comprehensive fight against terrorism in the western hemisphere. In particular, I wish to refer to the 1996 Lima Declaration and Plan of Action and the Mar del Plata Commitment of 1998, which provide valuable inspiration and encouragement for the work under way in the United Nations to prepare a convention on the suppression of terrorism in its various manifestations.

Another area of work that illustrates the pioneering role of the OAS is that being done in defence of democracy. This challenge, inscribed in the 1948 charter of the organization, was transformed into practice with the reform of the charter and the 1991 adoption of resolution 1080, which is known as the Santiago Commitment. In that resolution, among other things, the OAS General Assembly resolved

> "to instruct the Secretary-General [of the OAS] to call for the immediate convocation of a meeting of the Permanent Council in the event of any occurrences giving rise to the sudden or irregular

interruption of the democratic political institutional process".

A few years ago, a unit for the promotion of democracy was established in the OAS secretariat.

It is also appropriate to highlight the importance of cooperation between the OAS and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on questions related to trade and development.

We are pleased to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the two organizations. The large number of shared concerns — many of which, such as the promotion and defence of democracy, are of singular importance — suggests that the secretariats of the two organizations should enhance the dialogue they already enjoy by holding periodic meetings. We therefore recommend that members of the secretariats of the two organizations meet next year for a continued consideration of programmes of cooperation and other matters to be decided jointly.

We support draft resolution A/55/L.21. We hope that it, like past resolutions, will be adopted by consensus.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/55/L.21.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/55/L.21?

Draft resolution A/55/L.21 was adopted (resolution 55/15).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 21?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

United Nations A/55/PV.52

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

52nd plenary meeting
Monday, 6 November 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mungra (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 3 (*continued*)

Credentials of representatives to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly

(b) Report of the Credentials Committee

First report of the Credentials Committee (A/55/537 and Corr.1)

The Acting President: The draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 13 of its first report (A/55/537) reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Credentials Committee and the recommendation contained therein,

Approves the report of the Credentials Committee."

We shall now take action on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee as set out in paragraph 13 of its first report.

I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote or position before the Assembly takes action on the draft resolution.

Mr. Hamzehei (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation would like to express its reservations regarding those parts of the first report of the Credentials Committee (A/55/537 and Corr.1) that relate to the credentials of Israel. In line with the position of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on this issue, my delegation wishes to dissociate itself from the parts of the report that refer to the approval of the credentials of Israel.

The Acting President: The Credentials Committee adopted the draft resolution recommended in paragraph 13 of its report without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 55/16).

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 3.

Agenda item 14

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency (A/55/284 and Corr.1)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.25)

Amendment (A/55/L.26)

The Acting President: I invite the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, to present the report of the Agency for the year 1999.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

00-72996 (E)

Mr. ElBaradei (International Atomic Energy Agency): The Millennium Summit in early September focused the attention of the world on a number of objectives for the new millennium: the establishment of enduring world peace, the eradication of poverty, the fight against disease and the protection of the environment. In the efforts to realize these objectives, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays a modest but essential role. I will speak briefly today about the three fundamental functions of the Agency: our role as a catalyst for the development and transfer of peaceful nuclear technologies, our efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to move towards nuclear disarmament, and our work to build and maintain a global nuclear safety regime.

Nuclear technologies provide preferred solutions — and sometimes the only solutions — to many economic and social problems. The IAEA, in accordance with its statute, serves as a catalyst for the development and transfer of those technologies.

In 1999, nuclear power supplied roughly one sixth of global electricity. Trends vary by region: some countries are phasing out nuclear power plants, while others have embarked on new construction or innovative research and development. While the future of nuclear power remains uncertain, it is clear that certain factors will be crucial to that future: the safety of facility operations; the demonstrated feasibility of safe and environmentally sound radioactive-waste disposal; the ability to make nuclear power economically competitive; the growing need for environmentally clean sources of energy; and public acceptance. Projections of global energy demand, which take into account the development needs of developing countries and the predicted increase in population by two billion people over the next two decades, led the World Energy Council to conclude that a total reliance on fossil fuels and large hydroelectric facilities is not sustainable, and that the current position of nuclear power needs to be stabilized, with the possibility of future expansion.

In that context, the Agency's role is to help ensure that the nuclear power option remains open, a process that requires ensuring a fair hearing for nuclear power in the comparative energy assessment debate, preserving nuclear expertise as fewer young people pursue nuclear science careers and, above all, developing innovative reactor and fuel cycle technologies.

To be successful, innovative reactor and fuel cycle technologies must be inherently safe in terms of operation and waste disposal, proliferation resistant, cost effective and adaptable to different applications and energy needs. The Agency intends to establish a task force on innovative reactors later this year to assess the technology and energy demands of prospective users, consider existing efforts in this area and determine what additional research and development should be encouraged to meet the needs of member States. Naturally, we will work in close cooperation with other national and multinational initiatives in this area.

A major part of the Agency's nuclear technology activities are related to applications other than electricity generation. Agency-coordinated research projects supported by our research and service laboratories focus on the use of nuclear techniques and radioisotopes to, inter alia, increase food production, fight disease, manage water resources and protect the terrestrial and marine environments. In the food and agriculture area, for example, insect sterilization techniques have produced significant gains in livestock production and fruit production; radiation-induced mutations have been used to produce crops with greater yield and higher quality; and direct food irradiation has been employed to preserve freshness and eliminate disease-causing organisms.

With each year, new nuclear techniques related to human health are developed. This year the Agency's programme of assistance and coordination placed significant emphasis on the validation of new nuclear tools for diagnosing drug-resistant strains of malaria and tuberculosis. Other work was related to diagnostic procedures in support of medical applications ranging from paediatrics to cardiology and the use of stable isotopes in malnutrition studies to track the intake of vitamins and other nutrients.

The management of water resources is an area of increasing worldwide concern. Today, more than one billion people are without access to clean water, and about two thirds of the global community will face clean water shortages by 2025. In addition to projects on desalination techniques, the Agency has supported extensive member State use of isotope hydrology to plot groundwater aquifers for sustainable water resource management. We also have begun to support member States' exploration of the use of advanced

electron-beam accelerators to decontaminate and disinfect waste water and drinking water.

Other Agency projects focus on an array of environmental analysis and clean-up techniques. For example, the use of ionizing radiation to clean flue gases from coal-fired plants — a technology catalysed by the Agency — is now being demonstrated or under development in Bulgaria, China, Japan and Poland. Another important recent initiative is the Agency's coordination of efforts to develop nuclear techniques for the detection of anti-personnel landmines, which continue to maim civilians in regions where conflict took place in the past.

In each of these areas of nuclear application, the Agency seeks to promote the development and application of techniques that serve the priorities of its member States, with a focus on the special needs of developing countries. Where nuclear technology is the most effective means of addressing a given problem, and where the recipient country has the necessary infrastructure, the Agency ensures that the technology is transferred safely and efficiently. In 1999, our technical cooperation programme amounted to approximately $64 million, with more than 850 projects. The IAEA annual report for 1999, which the Assembly has before it, provides a more detailed discussion of these and other Agency achievements.

The Agency's safeguards system is designed to provide assurance that nuclear material and facilities are used exclusively for peaceful purposes. In recent years, we have strengthened our safeguards capabilities to enable us to provide assurances not only that declared nuclear material has not been diverted for non-peaceful purposes, but, equally importantly, that no undeclared nuclear material or activities exist. This comprehensive assurance, however, can be provided only for States that have in force both a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency and the complementary additional protocol. The Agency is also currently developing "integrated safeguards" — the optimum combination of traditional safeguards measures with those of the additional protocol to ensure a system that is cost-efficient while achieving a high degree of effectiveness.

Earlier this year, the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was convened here in New York. The Final Document of the Conference recognized IAEA safeguards as an essential component of the non-proliferation regime, and endorsed the strengthened safeguards measures of the additional protocol. However, the same document noted that 51 States parties to the Treaty have yet to bring comprehensive safeguards agreements into force. The additional protocol numbers are similarly disappointing: the 11 States that had additional protocols approved in the past year bring the total to 55, but so far only 17 of these have entered into force. I appeal to all States that have not done so to conclude and bring into force their respective comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols.

Since December 1998, the Agency has been unable to implement its mandate in Iraq under United Nations Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and related resolutions. As a result, we cannot at present provide any assurance that Iraq is in compliance with its obligations under those resolutions. In January of this year, with the cooperation of the Iraqi authorities, we carried out an inspection under Iraq's NPT safeguards agreement. Our inspectors were able to verify the presence of nuclear material under safeguards in Iraq. To be sure, this inspection was not designed to be, nor could it serve as a substitute for, the monitoring and verification activities mandated under the Security Council resolution. The Agency must return to Iraq if we are to provide the enhanced assurances sought by the Security Council. We continue to maintain an operational plan and capability that would allow us to resume our activities at short notice. Provided that we could verify that Iraq's past and present nuclear activities have not changed since December 1998, the Agency could move forward to a full implementation of its ongoing monitoring and verification plan.

The Agency also remains unable to verify that all nuclear material subject to safeguards in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been declared. Fully assessing the accuracy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's initial safeguards declaration will require a series of Agency activities to be undertaken with the full cooperation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Given that the entire verification process may take between three and four years, those activities should begin immediately, if the light water reactor project provided for in the Framework Agreement between the United States of America and the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea is to proceed as scheduled. With the recent positive developments in the Korean peninsula, it is my hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will soon be ready to commence active cooperation with the Agency to that end. The normalization of relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Agency would also help us to provide important safety advice and expertise related to the light water reactor project.

In keeping with the General Conference mandate, I have continued my consultations with the States of the Middle East region regarding the application of full-scope safeguards to all nuclear activities in the Middle East, and the development of model agreements that would contribute to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region. Regrettably, little progress has been achieved so far. Needless to say, I will continue to use all available means within my authority to move that mandate forward. Movement towards an overall settlement in the region will certainly boost my ability to make progress. At this year's General Conference, I was asked to make arrangements to convene a forum in which participants from the Middle East and other interested parties could meet to learn from the experience of other regions, including in the area of confidence-building relevant to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The Agency secretariat continues to consult with the Russian Federation and the United States of America on methods of verifying nuclear materials excess to their military programmes. These verifications must be sufficient to assure the international community that the material has been irreversibly removed from military application. In September, the United States of America and Russia also signed a bilateral plutonium management and disposition agreement. This new agreement commits each party to the withdrawal of 34 tons of weapons-grade plutonium from its weapons programme and to early consultations aimed at concluding an agreement with the IAEA to allow Agency verification measures. I welcome this agreement as a further step towards nuclear arms control.

The third major area of Agency activity is safety — nuclear safety, radiation safety and waste safety. While safety is a national responsibility, international cooperation on safety-related matters has proved to be indispensable. The continuing positive results of international collaboration leading towards safety upgrades at nuclear installations in Eastern Europe is an important case in point.

The international safety regime consists of three major components: international conventions, a body of internationally agreed safety standards and mechanisms for applying these standards. Conventions in the safety area aim to establish binding norms that cover activities across the entire fuel cycle. To date, the Agency has developed conventions that cover the safety of power reactors, radioactive waste and spent fuel management, early notification and assistance in case of a nuclear accident and physical security. The Agency continues to identify areas in which binding norms are needed, such as in the safety of research reactors and of fuel cycle facilities.

The Agency has also made significant progress in the past several years on updating its body of safety standards; nearly 80 new or revised standards will be produced in total. To be effective, these standards must be comprehensive, internationally agreed upon and subject to regular peer review. In my view, once agreed upon, these standards must be uniformly applied by all States, as is the case in the aviation field, which is under the auspices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Agency safety services, such as our operational reactor safety assessments, design reviews and regulatory reviews, also continue to make a significant contribution to promoting a global nuclear safety culture through peer review and information exchange.

The Agency also continues to focus international attention on the threats to public health arising from so-called orphan radioactive sources — that is, sources that are no longer under the control of national authorities. In the past year, assistance was provided to several Member States. Regrettably, five people died during this same period in Thailand and Egypt as the result of accidents involving radiation sources. We have worked extensively to strengthen the ability of Member States to respond to such emergencies, focusing on infrastructure upgrades, the development of national registries of radioactive sources, and the enhancement of regulatory structures. In addition, we have intensified education, training, and information exchange among regulators, users and manufacturers, and we recently circulated to all States and relevant international organizations a Code of Conduct on the

Safety and Security of Radiation Sources and Radioactive Materials.

But perhaps one of the most pivotal issues in the current debate over nuclear technology is the safety of managing spent fuel and radioactive waste. While experts are confident that geological disposal is safe, technologically feasible and environmentally responsible, the public at large remains skeptical, and the volume of high-level waste continues to build. A number of countries are engaged in geological disposal projects. Research is also active on waste disposal methods that are reversible, to allow retrieval of the waste at a later date, if desired. Researchers are also focusing on waste transmutation and other techniques to reduce the activity or volume of long-lived waste. The Agency continues to maintain international focus on the waste issue in order to accelerate progress towards demonstrated solutions and to bridge the gap in perception between technical experts and the public at large.

The foregoing review of portions of the Agency's programme makes it clear that the scope of IAEA activities continues to grow — whether that growth is occasioned by a new assignment for verification of nuclear arms control measures, a request by a developing country for help with water resource management, or the need for safety assistance at a fuel cycle facility. But in a continuing environment of zero real growth budget, which the Agency has adhered to for over a decade, some of these priority demands cannot be accommodated, or can be accommodated only through an increasing and excessive reliance on extra-budgetary resources — a reliance which has a negative impact on our ability to implement our programmes with the expected effectiveness and efficiency.

I should also mention that the Agency is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and keep qualified staff. Given our need for highly specialized technical personnel and the limited pool of resources, recruitment and retention is especially problematic for scientific staff, as well as in fields such as information technology. This situation will only continue to intensify as United Nations salaries and conditions of employment continue to lose their competitiveness with the private and public sectors.

The Common Service must become more flexible in order to respond to the needs of its organizations and support their reform efforts in human resources management. In that respect, the proposal by the Secretary-General, on behalf of all heads of United Nations system organizations, for a review of the International Civil Service Commission deserves serious consideration, with the ultimate aim of strengthening the international civil service and restoring the competitiveness of the Common System.

We have continued to look for ways to meet the growing demands on Agency resources. We are using a five-year medium-term strategy to improve the planning, implementation and evaluation of our activities. Our new results-based approach to programming and budgeting focuses more on outcomes — the real changes produced for our Member States — than on outputs, such as the number of meetings or publications, to ensure a more rigorous prioritization. An emphasis on a "one-house" approach to all our activities ensures better coordination of our diverse programmes, better use of our resources and a more streamlined secretariat structure.

In conclusion, let me say that the IAEA continues to play a key role in ensuring that the benefits of nuclear technology are shared globally, that peaceful nuclear activities are conducted safely, and that the international community is provided with a credible framework for curbing nuclear-weapon proliferation and moving towards nuclear disarmament. Naturally, our ability to continue to carry out these functions effectively depends on Members' political commitment and financial support, which I hope and trust will continue to be forthcoming.

Finally, I would like to conclude by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Government of Austria, which continues to be a generous and gracious host to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolution A/55/L.25.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria): Allow me at the outset to express appreciation to the Director General for his comprehensive report on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is noteworthy that under his leadership, the Agency has continued to fulfil its three major mandates, namely to serve as a catalyst for the development and transfer of technology, a recognized authority in nuclear safety, and an instrument for the verification of nuclear non-proliferation.

I am particularly delighted to note that these efforts have served in large measure to meet humanity's global objectives of freedom from fear and freedom from want — the major challenges facing it. In this connection, I also note with satisfaction the confidence placed in the Agency in the Final Document of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which reaffirmed its contribution to sustainable development, non-proliferation and safety.

Nigeria attaches great importance to the objectives of the Agency and has demonstrated on several occasions its political commitment and support for international peace and security and global non-proliferation efforts, especially those directed at curbing the spread of nuclear weapons and all forms of weapons of mass destruction. These objectives informed its decision to become a member of the Agency in 1964. Nigeria is therefore most honoured to introduce, in its capacity as Chairman of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), draft resolution A/55/L.25, on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The draft resolution before us is a reflection of the important issues raised earlier in the report presented by the Director General and the relevant resolutions adopted mainly by consensus at the forty-fourth session of the General Conference of the IAEA. I should therefore like to briefly highlight the main contents of this draft.

The text has 18 preambular paragraphs and 14 operative paragraphs and reiterates the importance that Member States attach to the agreement reached on the amendment of article VI of the statute. It seeks expansion of the membership of the Board of Governors from 35 to 43 members. Draft resolution A/55/L.25 dedicates an operative paragraph to encouraging all States members of the IAEA that have not yet ratified this amendment to do so. Similarly, a paragraph is devoted to the amendment of Article XIV.A of the statute, which provides for biennial budgeting by the Agency and urges those Member States that have yet to ratify this amendment to do so.

The draft draws attention to the increasing relevance of the non-proliferation regime; to the safeguards agreements, especially as they have a direct bearing on verification and confidence-building in general; and, particularly, to the need for the Agency to maintain and strengthen the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the integrated safeguards system, in conformity with the statute of the Agency. It further stresses the importance of the Model Additional Protocol approved on 15 May 1997.

The draft resolution also reiterates the concern of the international community in the field of nuclear energy with regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iraq. It expresses concern about the Agency's inability to verify the correctness and completeness of the initial declaration of nuclear material by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and, therefore, about the inability to conclude that there has been no diversion of nuclear material in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It calls upon that country to fully comply with its safeguards agreement with the Agency. With regard to inspections in Iraq, the text stresses the need for full implementation of all Security Council resolutions and for providing the necessary access to enable the Agency to carry out its mandate.

Attention is also drawn to the entry into force on 24 October 1996 of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and notes with satisfaction the outcome of the first review meeting of the contracting parties to the Convention. It looks forward to safety improvements in areas that are found deficient. With respect to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, it appeals to States that have not yet become parties to do so.

The draft resolution under consideration is a product of strenuous work. The consensus was reached after consideration of many proposals made by different delegations in Vienna. In this regard, Nigeria has taken cognizance of the genuine contributions of all delegations, which facilitated the achievement of this transparent and balanced text. Undoubtedly it is a factual and accurate representation of the main issues dealt with by the Agency during the period under review. At this juncture, let me express appreciation to the sponsors of this draft resolution and particularly to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Board of Governors, Austria and Poland.

I would equally like to express our appreciation for the support and cooperation received in Vienna and here in New York from the secretariats of the

International Atomic Energy Agency and of the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce the amendment to draft resolution A/55/L.25, contained in document A/55/L.26.

Mr. Aboulgheit (Egypt) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I would like at the outset to express warm thanks to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his excellent presentation of the annual report of the Agency for 1999. It also gives me great pleasure to congratulate him on his distinct contribution to the development of the programmes and activities of the Agency during the past three years. This contribution has been reflected in the increasing role played by the Agency in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy in various fields in the service of humanity, and in improving the relevant infrastructure.

The delegation of Egypt presented to the forty-fourth session of the General Conference of the IAEA a comprehensive review of all the fields in which it is cooperating with the Agency and of the role that we are trying to play at both the regional and international levels within the framework of the Agency's own role and programmes. From this perspective I would like to address a number of topics to which Egypt attaches particular importance.

The Agency is playing a prominent role in drawing up technical criteria to ensure the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and in contributing to technical cooperation programmes that promote the use of nuclear technology in a number of countries. This, however, should not lead us to ignore another important aspect of the Agency's work, which stems from its responsibility as one of the main pillars of the non-proliferation regime.

Egypt attaches great importance to the attainment of the objectives of non-proliferation and to ensuring nuclear disarmament all over the world. We think that in order to achieve progress in this respect, particularly in the Middle East region, this issue should be considered on an urgent basis, because of its potential positive impact on stability in the region as a whole. Within the framework of these efforts, Egypt has sought since 1974 to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Since 1980 the General Assembly has made an appeal for the creation of such a zone under a series of resolutions adopted by consensus.

In response to this unanimous show of support by the international community for the establishment of such a zone, in April 1990 President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak called for the establishment of a Middle East zone free from all weapons of mass destruction. This initiative was an extension and a natural development of Egypt's constant call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

In support of these efforts, and because of the importance of this subject, Egypt, through the IAEA, has called year after year for the comprehensive safeguards system of the Agency to be applied to all nuclear facilities in the Middle East. These efforts and appeals are not simply an Egyptian or an Arab demand; they are an international endeavour in which all other countries, regardless of their various alliances and orientations, join us. The international community expressed its position through the consensus adoption of the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was held in 2000.

The document welcomed the admission of all countries of the Middle East, except for Israel, to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It stressed the importance of Israel's adhesion to the Treaty and of subjecting all its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s comprehensive safeguards in order to attain the ideal objective, that of ensuring universal adhesion to this Treaty in the Middle East.

Thus, last week, the First Committee adopted a resolution under item 76 concerning the danger of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. The resolution was adopted by a majority of 139 votes; operative paragraph 2 stressed the importance of Israel's adhesion to the NPT. It mentioned Israel by name and called upon that country to subject its nuclear facilities to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards system. I would like to point out that my statement does not represent an attack on Israel; nor is it a criticism, although Israel imagines it as such and reiterates that view in its statements before the international body; rather, it is a call for a comprehensive and lasting peace based on firm foundations. We think that it is high time for Israel to act positively in this connection and to respond to the international will by joining the NPT and by

subjecting its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the Agency. It should also give up its old-fashioned doctrine of deterrence.

Nonetheless, Egypt will enthusiastically continue to work towards ensuring the application of the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards in the Middle East, without exception. We support all efforts aimed at strengthening the safeguards system, because it is the main international mechanism for verification. The IAEA is working to develop and support the safeguards system through the adoption in May 1997 of an additional model protocol for the safeguards agreements — I mean the 93 + 2 system — which Egypt supports — a system which provides the necessary legal basis for developing the Agency's ability to detect undeclared nuclear activities and nuclear materials. We think that the Agency plays an important role in urging countries to sign and implement the comprehensive safeguards agreements in accordance with article III, paragraph 1 of the Treaty, which is the basis for ensuring that the Agency verify that nuclear materials are not diverted from their declared activities. Moreover, this is the gist of the IAEA's verification activities, carried out in accordance with the non-proliferation regime.

I would like to reaffirm that any renunciation of our responsibilities or our commitment to apply the comprehensive safeguards system will have negative and dangerous consequences on the credibility of the safeguards system as a whole and the pioneering role played by the Agency in this respect.

Therefore, the Egyptian delegation has introduced an amendment to operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution concerning the report of the IAEA, contained in document A/55/L.26. Our amendment stresses the integrated role played by the Agency in carrying out safeguards activities and the importance of the comprehensive safeguards system, to say nothing about the additional protocols concerning those safeguards.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) *(spoke in Spanish)*: The Mexican delegation wishes to express its thanks to the Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the report on the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for 1999.

Mexico wishes to state its satisfaction with the positive results of the Sixth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) carried out this year. There can be no doubt that the adoption by consensus of the final document by the States Parties to the Treaty is one of the outstanding events in the field of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Of particular importance for the international community is the unambiguous commitment of the nuclear-weapons States to eliminate totally their nuclear arsenals, with a view to achieving nuclear disarmament.

Bearing in mind that one of the International Atomic Energy Agency's main functions is the application of verification measures on nuclear materials and equipment, the fulfilment of this commitment is of particular importance. Our satisfaction with the success of the NPT Review Conference also extends to our recognition of the important role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency in the application of safeguards, non-proliferation, technical cooperation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Mexico will continue to support this work of the Agency in those sectors.

The improved fulfilment of the verification responsibilities that the international community has entrusted to the IAEA requires a strengthened safeguards system. Mexico is satisfied at the increasing number of countries which have acceded to the Model Additional Protocol to the Agreements between States and the IAEA for the application of safeguards. At present, Mexico is carrying out an internal consultation process to facilitate a decision on our country's accession to the Model Additional Protocol.

Last year saw an increase in the cooperation links between Mexico and the Agency. Under the project entitled "Improvement of Radioactive Waste Management", Mexico's nuclear sector, headed by the Energy Ministry, has begun to formulate a national radioactive waste policy that meets the current needs of the sector and Mexico's international commitments. With IAEA support, Mexico's national nuclear research institute is carrying out work to rehabilitate the site currently occupied by the radioactive waste storage centre. This is a priority activity of the national nuclear sector.

With regard to regional cooperation activities, Mexico has reaffirmed its commitment to collaborate with Latin America by being the first country of the region to ratify the Regional Cooperative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science

and Technology in Latin America (ARCAL). We express our satisfaction at the support given by the IAEA to this programme. We are convinced that the implementation of regional cooperation agreements will work to the benefit of the Agency's general objectives. We urge the other States members of this mechanism to ratify the Agreement and to apply, within this framework, the criteria that have been proposed by the Agency's Board of Governors as part of the IAEA's new technical cooperation strategy.

In the area of nuclear safety, we look forward to renewed efforts by States to promote a universal culture of nuclear safety to include the promotion of binding legal instruments and safety standards and measures to apply these instruments and standards. We encourage all interested countries to work for a framework of understanding to ease the concerns of States that find their national security affected by the passage of ships carrying radioactive nuclear waste. Although work has begun in this field, much ground remains to be covered.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses its gratitude to the Director General and secretariat of the IAEA for their efforts to comply fully with the mandates entrusted to them by the States members of the Agency. We are aware that the success of their work depends, in addition to the political support of States, on adequate financing. In this connection, we encourage all States to meet their financial commitments to the Agency on time.

Mr. Bossière (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to address the Assembly on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Turkey, as well as Liechtenstein and Norway in their capacity as countries of the European Free Trade Association members of the European Economic Space, join in this statement..

At the outset, on behalf of the European Union, I wish to congratulate the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his work over the past year. The Union has leant its full support to initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of the Agency, with regard both to its programmes and activities and to its management.

The European Union supports the work of the Agency, undertaken in accordance with the resolution adopted at the forty-second session of its General Conference, to prepare a system of integrated safeguards. We pay tribute to the desire of the Director General to complete the necessary conceptual framework for the implementation of this programme by the year 2001. This system is designed to avoid redundancy and useless overlap in measures provided for in the traditional guarantees and in those of the enhanced system. It should allow the yield and effectiveness of these safeguards to be improved, while reducing the costs to the Agency through the progressive spread of these enhancement measures in States parties.

In this connection, we emphasize that new measures are not merely additional steps to be applied in a mechanical and systematic manner. We welcome the efforts of the secretariat to identify effectiveness in the context of budgetary neutrality, as well as the possibilities for a reduced volume of routine inspections from which States that have signed and satisfactorily implemented the Additional Protocol should eventually benefit.

The European Union attaches great importance to respect for the agreements entered into under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It continues to be concerned by the fact that, despite efforts undertaken by the IAEA, practically no progress has been made since 1994 to implement the Agency's safeguards Agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in particular with regard to verification of the initial declaration. Once again, the European Union urges to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fully to respect its safeguards Agreement and to cooperate with the Director General as soon as possible. I should also like to express the hope that recent developments in relations between the two countries of the Korean peninsula will also help to resolve such issues.

The situation in Iraq is also a matter of concern to the European Union, since, over nine months after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1284 (1999) of 17 December 1999, monitoring has yet to resume in Iraq. We call on Iraq fully to cooperate with the new Commission and with the IAEA. We insist that Iraq comply fully with all Security Council resolutions that concern it; at the appropriate time, provide the IAEA with the access necessary to enable the Agency to

implement its mandate, which was reconfirmed in resolution 1284 (1999); and give unreserved cooperation to the Agency with a view to updating a technically coherent picture of its clandestine nuclear programme, as prepared in 1998. Although a routine inspection in January made it possible effectively to monitor the physical inventory of nuclear material, in accordance with the safeguards Agreement signed by Iraq under the NPT, such monitoring cannot replace the activities to be undertaken by the Agency pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The European Union is gratified that the IAEA has used this time to maintain its capacity to resume inspections. Moreover, we welcome the work of Mr. Hans Blix at the head of the new Commission and will lend him our full support in implementing all provisions of resolution 1284 (1999).

Improved control of the risks of proliferation is essential to the maintenance of international peace and security. Meeting the requirements of non-proliferation and security, as well as those of nuclear safety, will contribute to establishing the climate of confidence that is necessary to develop the peaceful uses of the atom. Safety must be a constant concern and continually improved in all areas. One cannot emphasize enough the sole responsibility of States engaged in nuclear activities of any kind to their own population, their neighbours and the international community.

The European Union would also like to emphasize the importance of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. The regular holding of review meetings by the contracting parties supports a more evenly shared culture of safety throughout the world. We wish to ask all States to ensure that they ratify these Conventions and to speed up the entry into force of the Joint Convention. With regard to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, we await with interest the report of the second review meeting in the hope that improvements will be made in the area of safety, particularly in all domains where the first review meeting noted that such improvements could be made.

It remains necessary to make an effort to ensure that safety reaches internationally acceptable levels in all nuclear installations. To achieve this, cooperation on the part of all is necessary. The European Union also welcomes the key role that the Agency plays in this crucial area by providing States with support for national regulations, information and necessary assistance to States that so request. Moreover, the publishing of documents — the Safety Series — makes it possible for there to be more cohesive and stricter practices. In particular, the Operational Safety Review Team (OSART), the International Regulatory Review Team (IRRT) and the Integrated Safety Assessment of Research Reactors (INSARR) are making important contributions in this area.

The European Union would particularly like to reiterate to the Agency its support for its activities in the area of radiation source safety and the security of radioactive material. A code at good practices would be a good idea in order to rectify the lacks in this area, in which major shortcomings in the management of sources have resulted in serious radiological accidents. This past May and June the Agency carried out a wide-ranging air reconnaissance operation in order to find radioactive sources that had been abandoned in the Republic of Georgia.

Since its establishment, the Agency's mission has been to provide assistance and aid to member States for the development of peaceful applications of nuclear energy, the third pillar of the Agency's role. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty also clearly acknowledges the importance of the work of the IAEA as the principal international organization relating to the transfer of technology. As with all other activities of the Agency, this depends upon economic situations and the resultant budget constraints. It must be conducted rigorously, guided by the constant concern for maximum effectiveness and considered more as a sort of catalysing element than as a permanent form of subsidy.

The European Union has had numerous opportunities to support the efforts of the Agency, particularly under the guidance of the Agency's Director General, Mr. ElBaradei, to eliminate any laxity in managing technical cooperation. We firmly believe, however, that the IAEA cannot act in isolation. The simultaneous commitment of recipient States is of paramount importance, both in the financial area and in follow-up. In this respect, we fully support the concept of model projects and their implementation. The European Union appreciates, in particular, the attention that the IAEA has given to the establishment, in those countries that receive technical cooperation, when

necessary, of legislation and rigorous regulation in the area of radiation protection and safety, as well as of authorities that can ensure that such legislation is respected.

We also welcome the drawing up of measures to reinforce technical cooperation within the context of the overall economic activities of recipient countries and their congruity with the guidelines adopted in the sectors to which it is connected. The European Union also recommends the regular review of how a project has been carried out and an assessment of its results.

The high level of voluntary contributions from member States of the European Union to the Technical Cooperation Fund, which in 1999 reached approximately 40 per cent of the pledges collected, shows the vigorous support that the European Union gives to the Technical Cooperation Programme.

The European Union will continue to fully cooperate with its partners to achieve the goals of the Technical Cooperation Fund. It considers that the technical assistance provided by the Agency should be fully brought in line with national development programmes and that it is up to the recipient States to ensure this. Moreover, the recipient countries must make a significant contribution in order to demonstrate the importance that the States themselves attach to these projects. We note with regret that the Programme's recoverable expenditures were largely underpaid last year and call upon all recipient States to meet their financial obligations and repay their loans fully and on time. The European Union also believes that it is in the interest of recipient States and of the Agency to ensure good coordination between activities of technical cooperation of the Agency and those of other organizations, with a view to ensuring synergy and avoiding overlap.

My statement has highlighted the diversity and the richness of Agency activities. Moreover, we have pointed out the increase in costs caused by the broad responsibilities that it must meet. We encourage the Director General and his teams to continue their efforts to find ways to make savings at the management level, to identify priority tasks and to eliminate overlap with a view to reducing the dependency of the Agency on extra-budgetary financing. In particular, the necessary reinforcement of safeguards will probably entail additional expenditures during its initial phase. It would preferable for that financing to be carried out from the regular budget and for each State to make an equitable contribution in keeping with its means but without any excessive discount to such activities, which are in the interests of all.

The European Union notes that it attaches fundamental importance to the content of IAEA programmes, for which it pays approximately 34 per cent of the regular budget. On this essential point of programmes and budgets, we have welcomed with interest the new step proposed by the Agency in preparing activities for the 2002-2003 biennium.

In conclusion, the Agency has earned the trust of the international community as a competent authority in monitoring respect for safeguard agreements relating to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Simultaneously, it is playing an essential role in promoting the safe utilization of nuclear techniques for peaceful purposes in member States that have chosen to use such techniques.

Similarly, the European Union and the associated States that have joined in this statement reiterate to the Agency their support and firm will to continue to participate energetically in its activities.

For several years the European Union has supported the initiation of negotiations on and the rapid conclusion of, a multilateral international treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices. The European Union is ready to entrust a monitoring role to the Agency within the framework of such a treaty.

Mr. Moura (Brazil) *(spoke in Spanish)*: On behalf of the delegations of the countries of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and of the associated countries, Bolivia and Chile, I would like to express our satisfaction with the report introduced by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We reaffirm our permanent active commitment to the objectives of the international community with regard to non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the promotion of the peaceful uses of atomic energy, guaranteeing the right of all States to research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

In this connection, we regard the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme as being of great

importance. In particular, on the basis of our own experience as recipient countries and in some cases exporters of nuclear materials and energy, we support the actions to guarantee the exchange of materials, equipment and technology for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In our statement at the last session of the General Assembly, we urged the Agency, with regard to verification, to give the highest priority to the true integration of safeguards measures, and not merely to their increase. The countries of MERCOSUR and Bolivia and Chile reiterate their commitment to the new concept of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of safeguards, since safeguards play a clear function of transparency and mutual confidence amongst countries.

However, we would like to refer to the formula for financing safeguards adopted at the Agency's recent General Conference, which will involve a greater contribution for the countries of our region. The countries of MERCOSUR and Bolivia and Chile will encourage the periodic assessment of the costs of the safeguards and when necessary propose adjustments with a view to achieving the highest level of cost-benefit in their implementation in the light of the economic development of member countries.

We would also encourage the Secretariat to introduce greater efficiency in the use of the resources allocated to safeguards. In addition, we consider that the application of the Additional Protocol should be neutral with respect to the cost of safeguards.

The Agency also has special responsibilities with regard to the promotion of technical cooperation, for which it must have sufficient human and financial resources, with a proper balance between its promotion and regulatory activities.

With regard to the consideration of future programmes and budgets of the Agency, we support the position that there should be strict compliance with the zero real growth policy.

We believe that the Agency's activities should be carried out on the basis of transparency and the implementation of internationally accepted standards of nuclear safety and the physical protection of nuclear materials.

Nuclear safety is also of special importance in connection with the dissemination of information about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy among the public in our countries and its acceptance by public opinion. We believe that the use of nuclear energy in our region is closely linked with the adoption and implementation of adequate safety measures which will increase reliability and respect for the environment, thus guaranteeing greater acceptance of nuclear energy by our peoples.

The transportation of nuclear waste by sea is a source of constant concern, because of the possible dangers to the health of the coastal peoples and for the environment of the transit countries. In this context, we emphasize the need for cooperation and coordination in the relevant forums with a view to strengthening the norms regulating the transport of such waste by sea.

Lastly, we wish to underline the role of the Agency as a promoter of the peaceful use of nuclear energy and as a central protagonist of the international regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Mrs. Aragon (Philippines): Nuclear power holds the promise of safe and affordable energy, as well as improved agricultural productivity, safer foods and drinking water, and better human health for the continued growth and progress of our globalized world. At the same time, nuclear power still bears the potential for massive terror and destruction.

In all these instances, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays an important and challenging role. We would like to thank the Agency for its report, a report that succeeded in painting a clear picture of what the Agency has done and intends to do in carrying out this role. It is a significant and challenging role that the Agency has carried out quite well. The Philippines notes with satisfaction the continuing efforts of the IAEA in advancing the cause of non-proliferation, safety in the application of nuclear technology and technical cooperation in support of the peaceful uses of atomic energy, which are preconditions to enhancing world peace and safety. With the successful conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Agency's work in implementing the safeguards provisions of the NPT becomes even more important.

It is in this context that we welcome the two comprehensive safeguards agreements and eight Additional Protocols that have been signed during the past year, and the progress achieved in developing

integrated safeguards approaches for various types of nuclear facilities. The Philippines likewise welcomes the high technical cooperation implementation rate, as well as the Agency's efforts to update and foster national implementation of safety standards.

The Agency's activities to ensure and promote the safe use of nuclear energy are particularly important to those of us in Asia. While there has been no significant increase in the number of nuclear power plants in other parts of the world, in Asia planning for the expansion of nuclear power continues, and the use of nuclear power is likely to grow over the short term. We are confident that the Agency will ensure that the growth of nuclear power generation in our region is both safe and peaceful.

In the area of peace and stability, the Agency has also made its contribution, which has helped in achieving dramatic progress in opening up channels of communication and in broadening the dialogue in north-east Asia. While there is much to be done, the Philippines believes that what has been achieved so far has been in no small measure because of the dedicated and committed work of the Agency.

Even though the IAEA has already done much, there is still more work ahead for it. The Philippines welcomes and supports the request made by member States during the forty-ninth regular session of the General Conference last year for the Agency to help countries assess the role of nuclear power in the light of global environmental challenges and energy needs. We are glad that there was agreement that such assistance should include facilitating access to relevant information about the importance of nuclear power in achieving sustainable development in developing countries and in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

As an archipelago, the Philippines gives particular importance to the marine environment. We continue to support the Agency's efforts to monitor marine radioactive contamination of the marine environment in cooperation with other United Nations agencies. The Agency is helping develop and accumulate knowledge that could provide a basis for the rapid assessment of the impact of any possible future releases from accidents that might occur at coastal nuclear facilities or nuclear waste sites, or from the ocean transport of spent fuel or high level waste. The Agency has also used new remote measurement systems, with which it has confirmed that global fallout from atmospheric bomb testing is still the main source of anthropogenic radionuclides in the oceans, although levels have declined substantially.

The Agency has not let the dynamic changes in the world go by without seeking to reform itself. The Philippines welcomes its efforts to adopt measures that would make it better understand the needs of member States and to ensure a more efficient and effective response to them. We believe that the Agency is moving in the right direction with its new approach to the programme and budget formulation process, as well as with the decision to introduce results-based programming to the fullest extent possible for the 2002-2003 biennium.

In this regard, we would like to emphasize that, in view of the numerous demands placed upon the Agency, the limitations imposed by its budget and the need to preserve IAEA efficiency, it is imperative to pursue greater care in maintaining the delicate balance between its regulatory and promotional activities while discharging its mission.

In today's dynamic and interdependent world, many different and useful ways are being found to peacefully use and apply nuclear energy. Although the Agency was a child of the cold war, it has grown and matured, and we are confident that it will be able to successfully face today's many and diverse challenges.

Mr. Krokhmal (Ukraine): It is with great pleasure that the Ukrainian delegation takes part once more in the annual debate on the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) this time for 1999. I would like to thank Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei for his comprehensive introduction of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the General Assembly. The main developments in the Agency's activities during the current year are highlighted in the report and the statement made by the Director General. Ukraine feels it is important to underscore that the Agency's work has promoted further peaceful uses of nuclear energy in accordance with articles 1 and 2 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The NPT 2000 Review Conference once again stressed the need to unite efforts worldwide in curbing the nuclear arms race and further promote international security by universally adhering to the Treaty. Having signed a protocol additional to the Safeguards Agreement on 15 August this year, Ukraine took the

next logical step to move towards the goals of the NPT and the Safeguards Agreement. We believe it will contribute to making further progress towards the universal application of the safeguards regime, given the level of nuclear activity in Ukraine.

We reiterate the significant role that the Agency plays in assuring the fulfilment of obligations by member States under article 3 of the Treaty. We call upon all members of the Agency that have not done so to sign a protocol additional to their Safeguards Agreement as soon as possible.

The application of the highest safety standards in terms of design and operation of peaceful nuclear installations is yet another major responsibility of the Agency. In the last decade the Agency has extensively developed and promoted nuclear safety standards and has carried out multidimensional tasks, ranging from facilitating national legislative processes to promoting reliable technologies, good regulatory practices and staff training in member States. We commend the Agency for organizing the First Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, in April 1999, which we believe will help improve safety performance among member States.

I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the historic decision by the Government of Ukraine to close by 15 December 2000 the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. We consider this step a valuable contribution by Ukraine to mitigating and minimizing the Chernobyl disaster, despite the fact that the closure of the Chernobyl station presents a number of challenging problems, with a new range of socio-economic ramifications for my country.

As a follow-up to the Director General's recent visit to Ukraine, another step was taken towards promoting safety within the framework of the Technical Cooperation Programme for the 2001-2003 cycle. Two additional projects have been agreed upon: support for the decommissioning of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and the characterization, management and physical protection of radioactive material from the shelter at the Chernobyl station. This is an example of how the coordinating role of the Agency in international cooperation helps in a practical way to resolve problems of major concern to the international community. Ukraine has achieved considerable progress in improving its safety record, as well as in establishing a recognized legislative and regulatory base.

I would like to inform the Assembly that in the year 2000 Ukraine ratified the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, and has acceded to the Joint Protocol Relating to the Application of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Paris Convention on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy.

The Agency's efforts against illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources are widely acknowledged. We attach importance to cooperating with the Agency under the Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear Material, and to exchanging information with the Agency's illicit trafficking database. Ukraine joins other States in supporting efforts to draft an international convention on the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. Ukraine, as a party to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, supports the draft resolution calling on countries that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention in order to strengthen our efforts to combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources.

The technical cooperation pillar of the Agency's activities can hardly be overestimated. The report of the Agency to the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons proves that the Agency is meeting its commitments under article IV of the Treaty. Ukraine believes that the Agency's productive technical cooperation in the nuclear field indeed provides for the development of Member States in terms of the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.

In conclusion, with these comments the Ukrainian delegation welcomes the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the General Assembly for the year 1999. As a traditional co-sponsor of the draft resolution on the Agency's report, my delegation remains committed to the Agency's goals. We believe that this year's draft resolution will reflect in a balanced and comprehensive manner the support of the international community for the work of the Agency.

Mr. Punj (India): The Indian delegation has taken note of the report of the International Atomic

Energy Agency (IAEA) presented by the Agency's Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei. As a founding member of the Agency, India continues to play an active role in the work of the IAEA. We are particularly happy that the mechanism of the Scientific Forum, held to coincide with the annual General Conference of the IAEA, has now been institutionalized.

In its overview, the annual report makes a reference to the Medium-Term Strategy, which was developed in 1999 to form the basis for the formulation of programme proposals for the period 2001-2005. In this regard, India would like to emphasize that the IAEA was created with the main objective of accelerating and enlarging the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. This is the central pillar on which the Agency should rest, while giving due consideration to safeguards measures to prevent the use of Agency assistance for military purposes and to safety standards for the protection of health and the minimization of danger to life and property.

Safety and safeguards are indeed important and necessary support activities for enlarging and accelerating the contribution of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, they should not become activities that overshadow the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Primacy must be accorded to technology. This is the only way we can faithfully interpret the time-tested Statute of the Agency.

Our delegation supports the priority assigned to the potential role of nuclear energy in sustainable development in the Medium-Term Strategy, which is in line with the recommendations of the Scientific Forum held during the 1999 General Conference of the IAEA. The Agency programme should include the role of innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles in promoting sustainable development. We appreciate the Director General's efforts in trying to establish a task force for that purpose. We feel strongly that it will be worthwhile for the Agency to support this programme as part of the regular programme of the Agency.

In the context of the sustainability of nuclear power, it is appropriate for the Agency to address the issue of various nuclear fuel cycle options. A discussion by experts on the merits and problems of the closed fuel cycle versus the open fuel cycle with its associated technical, financial and environmental aspects could form a meaningful part of the Medium-Term Strategy. In view of our limited uranium resources and in order to ensure long-term energy security, India has opted for a closed nuclear fuel cycle policy involving a fast breeder reactor programme and thorium utilization and associated fuel reprocessing and refabrication plants. A closed fuel cycle is also important for the safe management of the environment, as it greatly reduces the quantity of high-level wastes.

Recognizing the importance of the role of nuclear energy, especially in developing countries, India, along with the Group of 77, has been requesting a nuclear technology review along the lines of the nuclear safety review, and to have it discussed as part of the dedicated agenda in the Board and in the General Conference. We are happy that the Director General has heeded our request and has also appointed standing advisory groups for nuclear energy and nuclear science and applications.

Even in countries that are currently witnessing a slow-down in their nuclear power development programmes, it is likely that a reversal will occur due to two factors. First, there has been a substantial increase in oil prices, and, secondly, there is the commitment to the Kyoto Protocol. For a large country like India, with its need to increase its per capita electricity consumption substantially, rapid growth in nuclear electricity generation capacity is of vital importance.

In India our strong policy emphasis on nuclear power is based on the operation of nuclear power plants in a safe and reliable manner. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board of India stringently monitors all activities in this regard. It is a matter of satisfaction that since the last General Assembly, two more state-of-the-art, indigenously designed power reactor units have reached criticality — one unit in Karnataka State and another in Rajasthan State. Another reactor unit is due to reach criticality shortly. Construction work on the two indigenously designed 500 megawatt pressurised heavy-water reactor units at Tarapur is in full swing. The preparation of the detailed project report for the construction of two 1,000 megawatt VVER reactors at Kudankulam, in technical cooperation with Russia began in April 1999 and is expected to be completed next year. Site-related activities have already commenced.

The capability to provide the technology resources for our nuclear programme has been derived mainly from our strong research and development programme. India's efforts in developing the advanced heavy water reactor, which will facilitate thorium utilization, go towards developing innovative reactor and fuel cycle designs for the sustainable development of nuclear energy. The growth in installed power generation capacity will, of course, continue with plants using state-of-the-art-design thermal and fast reactors with an emphasis on improved safety.

In this context, we appreciate the initiative of President Putin, announced at the recent Millennium Summit, by which he recognized that the most rapid energy-production growth in the next century will take place in the developing countries. He has also said that to diminish ecological degradation caused by greenhouse gases and to save global fossil reserves for non-electricity uses by present and future generations there is a need to develop new nuclear technologies which are also proliferation-resistant.

The IAEA, with its comprehensive membership covering almost the entire world, and, more important, the developing Member States, have a collective responsibility to find technological solutions to such problems. For its part, India, as always, strongly supports those efforts and will actively participate in such initiatives.

Our research and development programme has continued to lay emphasis on areas such as medicine, agriculture and industry. Some work in those areas has also been taken up under the aegis of the Regional Cooperation Agreement programme for Asia and the Pacific. As a founder member of that programme, India is a strong supporter of the programme and has hosted several events, including the meeting of national coordinators of the Agreement early this year.

India has consistently supported the technical cooperation activities of the Agency and pays its annual contribution to the Technical Cooperation Fund regularly and in full. We are concerned that there is a widening gap between pledges and actual contributions, and we urge all member States, especially the major donor countries, similarly to pledge and pay in full.

Simultaneously, the Agency should orient its technical cooperation programmes in such a way as to promote self-reliance among developing countries rather than reliance on developed countries. We have called on the Agency to identify centres of excellence for human resources development under the programme of technical cooperation for developing countries, and have offered our training facilities to scientists and engineers from developing countries. In that regard, in a signal event, India this year signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the IAEA on cooperation in connection with the Agency's regional and inter-regional training events, and with individual and group fellowship training programmes carried out as part of the technical cooperation activities of the IAEA. The Memorandum of Understanding is an important milestone in our relationship with the IAEA, and it formalizes our longstanding offer to make the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre a centre of excellence/regional resource unit under the Agency's programme of technical cooperation for developing countries.

There is a need to see an improvement in the quality of the implementation of safeguards. Much has changed in technology since 1971, when the new inspection regime was put in place. This should be reflected in the quality and quantity of inspection efforts, with corresponding reductions in cost. The argument that increases in safeguards need to be accommodated automatically because they are mandatory requirements under agreements, as required under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), raises the question of the differences between statutory activities and mandatory activities. With promotion being the primary statutory aim of the IAEA, we wonder why only 5.9 per cent of the IAEA budget goes for an important activity such as nuclear power. On the other hand, there seems to be no holding back of resources for safeguards activities, with a call now for the extrabudgetary contribution also to be incorporated into the regular budget. Such actions would further hurt promotional activities.

We reiterate our appreciation of the Agency's efforts to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. Yet in our neighbourhood, clandestine acquisition of sensitive technology and materials is known to have occurred. Preventing this requires the commitment of States members of the Agency. Both on the issue of physical protection measures and on export controls, India follows a stringent law-based system, which is borne out by its exemplary record.

As we move into the new millennium, it is time to pause, to rethink our strategies and to examine our options. We need a fresh look at the importance of nuclear power, brushing aside the shroud of prejudice and apprehension. Let us pool our collective wisdom and scientific knowledge and work together under the aegis of the IAEA to address the challenges of global development through the deployment of nuclear technologies, overcoming the barriers that stand in the way. In that context, a welcome step was the industry forum organized by the Agency in January this year with the aim of harmonizing and focusing promotional efforts being made by the private sector, Governments and intergovernmental organizations in the field of nuclear power.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): My delegation would like to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his comprehensive report on the work and activities of the Agency in 1999. We wish also to express our appreciation for the outstanding performance of the Agency under his leadership.

On the occasion of the fifty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, and in the context of the Millennium Assembly, it is appropriate to reflect on some of the main achievements of the IAEA and on the challenges facing the international community regarding its work. In May this year, the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), for the first time in 15 years, adopted a consensus report on the review of the Treaty over the past five years, which set an agenda for the next review period, until 2005. It was particularly significant that the Conference reaffirmed that the IAEA was the competent authority responsible for verifying and assuring compliance with its safeguards agreements with individual States. The implementation of a new integrated optimal safeguards system should therefore take place as a matter of urgency. Although the Agency is in the process of developing such a system, it will require fresh thinking to integrate the rigid, highly quantitative elements of the old system into a new, flexible, non-mechanical, qualitative approach, as allowed by the additional protocols.

It is often said that safety and security are gained at a cost. It is certainly not any different when referring to the safeguards system. The entry into force of additional protocols will no doubt further increase the Agency's burden, as will the outcome of the trilateral initiative among the Agency, the United States of America and the Russian Federation.

Since all of these activities are important for strengthening the non-proliferation regime, an innovative solution for the safeguards budget will have to be found soon. Such a solution should take into consideration the abolishment of shielding the burden on the developing countries should not be increased further. It is South Africa's sincere hope that the significant concession made by the developing countries in September this year will be balanced by a long-term political and financial commitment by the donor countries to the Technical Cooperation Fund that will be able to fulfil the real and urgent needs of the developing States members of the IAEA.

The primary function of the IAEA is to encourage and assist in research, development and the practical application of atomic energy for peaceful purposes throughout the world. South Africa commends the Agency for the initiatives and activities undertaken during the past year in this field. In particular, we wish to mention the role of the IAEA in assisting South Africa in the review of the technical and economic feasibility, safety and nuclear non-proliferation aspects of the pebble bed modular reactor. The Agency's report, following its investigations, will inform our further decision-making process on the possible expansion of nuclear power generation in South Africa.

South Africa considers the Agency's assistance to developing countries, under its Technical Cooperation Programme to be very important. In this connection, it is significant to recall that the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) accentuated the continued relevance of the programme. The Conference also welcomed the Agency's new strategy for technical cooperation, which seeks to promote socio-economic impact within its core competencies by integrating its assistance into the national development programme of each country with a view to ensuring sustainability through expanding partnerships in development, model project standards and the use of country programme frameworks and thematic plans. In the case of South Africa, the Technical Cooperation Programme has been significantly increased due to a number of successful proposals for the 1999-2000 cycle, while existing

projects are delivering outstanding results. Our country programme framework has also been completed and submitted to the Agency.

In a regional context, the application of nuclear technology has in many instances brought viable solutions to some of the problems the African continent faces. Africa has greatly succeeded in tailoring a communal approach to the peaceful uses of nuclear science through the work and activities of the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology. In this regard, I also wish to extend a word of appreciation to the IAEA for its involvement with that organization.

Although South Africa is pleased that an interim solution for the funding of technical cooperation projects has been found, we continue to believe that this solution should be considered only temporary. Contributions from major donor countries will still be required, and South Africa urges these countries to fulfil their obligations in full and on time to ensure the successful implementation of this important function of the Agency. The challenge of securing an assured and predictable basis for the Technical Cooperation Fund lies ahead. It will continue to be an important issue for developing countries members of the IAEA in the coming years.

Another important aspect of the Agency's programme is nuclear, radiation and waste safety. Environmental considerations, safety operations and waste management practices in particular are issues that are growing in significance and increasingly becoming people's issues, business imperatives, subjects for sensitive Government debate and technological challenges. The future of nuclear energy as a source of electricity production is very much dependent on the safe operation of nuclear facilities and on the obtaining of acceptable solutions — in the minds of decision-makers and the public — for the safe management and disposal of nuclear waste. The guidance provided and the activities conducted by the IAEA with member States in this field during the past year should be commended. In this regard, South Africa welcomes the IAEA Action Plan, developed to, inter alia, achieve better control infrastructures and better information exchange among role players as well as intensified education and training.

The 2000 Scientific Forum, held during the IAEA General Conference, played an important role in bringing to the attention of Governments some of the most important scientific and technical issues in the field of radioactive waste management and in promoting awareness of the international dimension of current developments. The South African approach to this issue is a comprehensive one. A national radioactive waste management policy and strategy are currently under development. This will pave the way for signature and ratification of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

In our view, the Agency is succeeding in the fulfilment of its mandate. The Director General's report demonstrates clearly that all important aspects in the field of nuclear technology are currently being covered by the Agency. We congratulate the Agency on addressing its objective in this way and look forward to our continued cooperation with the IAEA in the year to come.

Finally, as a traditional sponsor of the annual General Assembly draft resolution on the report of the Agency, my delegation hopes that the draft resolution will be finalized with a view to its adoption by the Assembly as soon as possible. To this end, we call on all delegations to show the maximum flexibility, bearing in mind the successful outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the recent IAEA General Conference.

Mr. Galuška (Czech Republic): As the Czech Republic has aligned itself with the position presented on behalf of the European Union and associated countries by the head of the French delegation, I would like only to touch upon some of the topics that are of particular importance to my country.

The peaceful uses of nuclear energy are inseparably connected to the implementation of safeguards and the improvement of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). To demonstrate its full commitment to the principles of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Czech Republic signed the Additional Protocol to Safeguards Agreement on 28 September 1999, and since then the proper amendments to the relevant domestic legal act have been drafted. These will be presented to the Czech Government this year, with the understanding that the

Czech Parliament will act on them not later than early 2001. Thus, the Czech Republic will be ready to ratify and implement the Additional Protocol in the very near future.

The Czech Republic considers the consistent implementation of safeguards, together with the physical protection of nuclear materials — not only during international transport, but also with respect to all operations related to nuclear material handling in the country's territory — to be the pillars of the system for preventing the illegal trade in nuclear materials and of the struggle against nuclear terrorism.

We welcomed, and supported from the very beginning, the activities aimed at a review of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, and positively viewed the informal open-ended expert meeting initiated by the IAEA Director General. The Czech Republic is convinced that with the close cooperation with Member States, positive results can be reached in terms of deepening and strengthening the Convention.

Nuclear-power generation constitutes the main part of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the Czech Republic. At the beginning of this year, the Czech Government approved the country's new energy policy strategy, which envisages further use of nuclear energy for electricity generation, thus enabling a desirable diversification of energy sources and, consequently, a substantial reduction of carbon dioxide emissions on the one hand and of the exploitation of the Czech Republic's limited fossil fuel deposits on the other.

At the same time, the Czech Government believes that the highest possible level of nuclear safety and radiation protection is the necessary precondition for the use of nuclear-power-generating facilities. To make this aim feasible, the Czech legislative and regulatory framework has been profoundly reformed over the past few years. The recodified legislation reflects our experience with the more than 50 reactor-years of operation of the Dukovany nuclear power plant's four units, current international practices — including IAEA recommendations — and, not least, the latest findings of science and research. The Czech Republic therefore has modern legislation under which the State's regulatory authority — the State Office for Nuclear Safety — is granted sufficient independence, resources and competencies to secure the highest level of nuclear safety and radiation protection with respect to all relevant activities.

The Czech Republic fully recognizes the international dimension of nuclear safety and radiation protection issues. Through the mechanism of expert missions organized by the IAEA, we have received an independent review of the licensing process applied by the State Office for Nuclear Safety in the case of the Temelin nuclear power plant, as well as an assessment of the plant's readiness for the start-up phase. The experts stated in their final reports that the Czech Republic has a firmly defined regulatory and legislative framework in place and that the licensing process is run in line with the world's best practices. They also took a positive view of the Temelin nuclear power plant's readiness for start-up.

It goes without saying that all the partial recommendations of the missions were immediately implemented. The conclusions of both missions, as well as those of the more than 10 other missions that have taken place at the nuclear power plant over the past 10 years, are publicly available and give a clear overview of the efforts of the licence holder and the responsible governmental authorities to ensure the highest achievable level of nuclear safety for the facility.

Having said that, I would like to stress that the Czech authorities have always been ready and willing to engage in a broad-based dialogue on cross-border aspects of the safety of the Temelin nuclear power plant, including the environmental ones. We have never failed to provide honest answers to questions posed in bilateral dialogues, and we do so over and above our international legal commitments, both multilateral and bilateral.

The Czech Republic has been involved in the IAEA technical cooperation programme for many years. The basic strategy of the country's involvement is to balance the volume of technical assistance received under the Programme with the assistance provided by our country to other Member States. Specifically, the Czech Republic has been increasing both voluntary financial contributions and in-kind assistance to selected national or regional projects.

Between 1998 and 2000, the Czech Government allocated $200,000 to a project in Ukraine, the purpose of which is to install a new system for non-destructive inspection of VVER-1000 reactor vessels, and, more

recently, $100,000 to a two-year programme to assist the nuclear regulatory authority of Armenia in the assessment of the integrity of the Medzamor nuclear power plant's primary circuit. We believe that a similar attitude on the part of other countries could, in view of the zero-growth situation of the Agency's budget, help to expand the activities under the Programme.

At the end of my intervention, I would like to express the Czech Republic's high esteem for the IAEA Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, and for his personal involvement and the management skills he uses in leading the Agency. I wish also to express appreciation for the results the IAEA has achieved under his leadership in promoting international cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): It is a great honour for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his comprehensive report to the General Assembly and for the outstanding performance that he and his staff have registered in the last year.

Viet Nam attaches great importance to the work of the IAEA in promoting cooperation among Member States in the field of the peaceful uses of the atom. As a developing country, Viet Nam has focused its efforts on expanding its cooperative activities with the Agency itself as well as with other Member States under the auspices of the Agency. Over the last 20 years of its membership, Viet Nam has been fortunate enough to enjoy the excellent cooperation promoted by the Agency. We have received generous assistance from the Agency and from a good number of developed countries which are more advanced in nuclear technology and applications.

On this occasion, my delegation wishes to express our deep gratitude to the experts of various nationalities, and to the international community in general, for the generous assistance they have provided and the hard work they have done in the area of nuclear applications for health, agriculture and safety. We are particularly grateful that hundreds of our experts have had the opportunity to participate in the training courses organized by the Agency in the past few years.

The ongoing technical cooperation activities carried out by the Agency to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are of keen interest to the Vietnamese Government. Nuclear energy has been well established as the cleanest, most environmentally friendly and most efficient means of energy generation. The development of nuclear energy will further enhance the sustainable economic development of many developing countries. It is our firm belief that greater financial support and technical expertise should be allocated to efforts to assist developing countries in sharing in the benefits and uses of nuclear energy.

Viet Nam supports the work of the Agency in the field of verifying and monitoring compliance with the safeguards agreements signed by Member States in accordance with the Agency's Statute and safeguards system. At the same time, we wish to underline that the utmost effort should be made to ensure that verification activities are fully impartial and do not violate the national sovereignty of States. The verification officers must comply fully with the verification regulations and guidelines as well as with the agreements entered into by Member States with the Agency.

As regards the draft resolution entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", contained in document A/55/L.25, our delegation finds that the draft this year is more balanced and captures the general views of Member States. Our delegation, therefore, will vote in favour of this draft resolution, if there is still a need for a vote to be taken.

In conclusion, we wish to add that Viet Nam will continue to do its best to further its cooperation with the Agency and other member countries to achieve the objectives and goals of the IAEA.

Mr. Dausá Céspedes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I begin by expressing my delegation's sincere thanks to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the Agency's annual report.

Cuba attaches great importance to the work of the IAEA. Over the years our country has had a significant technical cooperation programme with the IAEA, with excellent results in the fields of human health, agriculture and industry and in other fields.

Within the framework of the programme of Regional Cooperative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America

and the Caribbean (ARCAL) many projects have been carried out, solving concrete problems in our region. This programme is the proper framework for nuclear cooperation between the Latin American and Caribbean countries. We consider that this cooperation programme can administer contributions very efficiently — and even greater contributions than are currently being received from the IAEA.

Despite the considerable results achieved, the Agency faces many challenges. We believe that at present there is an imbalance between the two fundamental categories of the IAEA's work. Cooperation and technical assistance have not benefited from the same vigour and integrity as the safeguard activities. The trend towards a real decline in financing for technical cooperation activities fails to respond to the growing needs of developing countries. These activities must not only be maintained, but strengthened and diversified.

The IAEA must maintain an ever-growing, predictable and secure fund for technical cooperation. This can be achieved only through a genuine commitment by all member States, and especially the developed countries, which can and must provide greater financial and technological support. It is unfortunate that the value of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Fund has been frozen for the next biennium at $73 million, despite the imperative need to increase it. Cuba advocates maintaining a proper balance between the cooperation activities and safeguards activities of the IAEA. The latter should be made part of an effective and efficient system, and should not become an excessive burden for the poorer countries.

At the most recent General Conference of the IAEA the system of protection with regard to financing Agency safeguards was eliminated. While acknowledging the responsibility of all member States to finance safeguards, this system, which functioned for more than 30 years, took into account certain political and financial elements to determine countries' level of contributions. Accordingly, greater participation was requested of States in a better position to bear the relevant financial burden. The elimination of this protective system has meant that in practice a larger budgetary burden is being transferred to countries less able to bear it.

As regards safeguards, the question of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is becoming almost unavoidable, particularly when so much has been said and written as a result of the Sixth Review Conference, held this year. Cuba's position on the Treaty is well known. We believe that its provisions are fundamentally discriminatory and selective, as they legitimize the possession of nuclear weapons by a select club of countries. The nuclear Powers legitimized by the NPT are not even obliged to submit their nuclear installations and arsenals to IAEA safeguards. Nor does the Treaty prohibit vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, and it makes possible their continuous qualitative improvement by the nuclear Powers recognized under the Treaty. These are the basic reasons why Cuba has not yet signed or ratified the NPT.

Although it is not a party to the NPT, Cuba has entered into safeguards agreements with the IAEA regarding all our nuclear installations, and we strictly comply with them. In October 1999, when the Director General of the IAEA visited our country, we signed the Protocol additional to the Safeguards Agreements between Cuba and the Agency, thereby becoming the first non-signatory of the NPT to sign such a protocol.

As part of the ironclad economic, trade and financial blockade imposed on Cuba for more than 40 years now by the United States Government, our programme for the peaceful use of nuclear energy has been and continues to be the subject of various activities designed to prevent this programme from making progress. As is well known, in 1996 the United States Government adopted the infamous Helms-Burton Act, which, inter alia, asserts that the completion and operation of any nuclear facilities in Cuba, without regard to whether they are engaged in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, will be considered an act of aggression demanding an appropriate response from the United States. Other current United States laws spell out actions to boycott in various ways the Cuban nuclear programme and, in particular, technical cooperation between our country and the IAEA. Such laws even go so far as to order a reduction in the level of assistance provided by the United States to third countries by the same amount as these countries' contribution to the Cuban nuclear programme.

Cuba reiterates its strong rejection of such discriminatory activities, which clearly run counter to

the Statute of the IAEA. Despite these activities, our country will continue to develop its nuclear programme for peaceful purposes in a completely transparent manner and to work tirelessly for nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Cuba regrets that in recent years the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA has had to be adopted by a vote. This is the sole case in the General Assembly in which such a resolution is not adopted by consensus. This cycle of confrontation must end. There never should have been such a confrontation regarding this draft resolution. It is necessary to restore the practice — which for various reasons was ignored for several years — of including in the text only questions that enjoy the support of all delegations. This would make it possible for the General Assembly to give a clear signal of unity and support for the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Cuba reiterates that it stands ready to contribute to efforts to achieve this objective.

Mr. Wulf (United States of America): I extend my thanks to Director General ElBaradei for his excellent report on the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during the past year. I would also ask him, on behalf of the United States delegation, to convey to all of his staff our appreciation of their hard work and dedication in pursuit of the many activities the Director General described to us in his statement.

Among the strengths which the IAEA brings to its portfolio is its ability to change over time. In our evolving world, the needs and priorities of States are constantly changing. To meet these needs effectively, the IAEA must also constantly adapt, initiating or modifying its programme of work to respond to the demands of its member States. Over the past decade these demands have escalated dramatically. And the IAEA has responded — through expanded work in hydrology, new initiatives in landmine detection, a comprehensive work plan on orphan nuclear sources and extensive efforts to strengthen safeguards, to name only a few examples. This ability to adapt and change is crucial to the Agency's long-term effectiveness and relevance. Yet change, as we all know, can be difficult for any organization. Hence it is all the more commendable that this international organization, with its diverse programme and staff, is able to meet the needs for change as well as it does.

Commitment to its goals is central to the success of any institution. The fact that the IAEA is widely regarded as one of the most effective and successful international organizations is due in no small measure to the strong commitment of its staff to the Agency's work. Whether in nuclear cooperation, nuclear safety or verification, the dedication of the men and women in the IAEA Secretariat to getting the job done is clear. Many staff members routinely and willingly put in extra hours, working into the evenings and on weekends to complete the task at hand. This commitment means that nuclear cooperation helps to support the health and nutrition of people throughout the world, that this cooperation can proceed under strict and effective international safety measures and that the risk of illicit use of nuclear materials is effectively constrained.

Commitment must go hand in hand with competence to assure sound performance. The quality of the IAEA's programmes clearly reflects the many skills which the Secretariat staff brings to its work. The fact that the world community repeatedly and consistently has turned to the IAEA as a means to manage intractable problems — from the Chernobyl disaster to the nuclear challenges posed by Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — reflects the confidence of many States that the Agency will provide a reliable means by which to respond to these problems.

The ability to adapt and change and the commitment and competence of its staff have long been hallmarks of the IAEA. Over its many years of service to the international community, the importance of the Agency's work has been widely recognized. For example, earlier this year the central role of the Agency in nuclear issues was repeatedly underscored in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Conference recognized many of the diverse aspects of the Agency's work, as well as many of the new initiatives that it is pursuing. Among these, as the Director General noted, is the role the IAEA could play in support of the disarmament objectives of the NPT by helping to assure the international community that the removal of excess fissile materials from nuclear weapons is proceeding. This would help meet the Final Document's call for irreversibility by all nuclear-weapon States and, in particular, the call to complete and implement the Trilateral Initiative. The United

States, Russia and the IAEA are very close to agreement on the legal framework for such verification, and we hope the remaining minor differences can be readily resolved.

As the IAEA works to deal with this and the many other important issues before it, let us all keep in mind the Director General's statement that the Agency's ability to continue to carry out these functions effectively depends on States' political commitment and financial support. All IAEA members are, of course, concerned that the Agency pursue its programmes in the most cost-effective manner possible. At the same time, we remain mindful of the call by the 2000 NPT Review Conference to provide the Agency with the resources it needs to do its work. Preserving the strength and effectiveness of this vital international organization clearly serves the needs of us all.

Finally, the United States is pleased to add its name to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We support the present text, as agreed by consensus in Vienna.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): Allow me to begin by expressing my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. ElBaradei, for his comprehensive report and for the remarkable work he and his staff have done over the past year.

Since its creation four decades ago, the IAEA has contributed significantly to strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime by implementing the safeguards provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other international agreements. At the same time, the Agency has promoted peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the economic and social development of humankind.

Let me now comment on some of the Agency's activities to which my Government attaches great importance. The Agency has been fostering international cooperation to enhance the development of peaceful nuclear technologies and their applications to meet energy demands and other human needs. Its activities extend beyond nuclear power to cover non-power applications in such diverse areas as agriculture, health and water resources management.

The use of nuclear energy has benefited the international community to a degree unparalleled in history, but not without undesirable consequences. Presently the nuclear industry is faced with the challenges of ensuring public acceptance and economic competitiveness. We therefore share the view that the future of nuclear energy may depend heavily on the successful development of safe, innovative reactors and fuel cycle technologies, including small and medium-sized reactors.

In this regard, the Republic of Korea has completed the concept design of a 330-megawatt small-sized reactor, called SMART. Our experience in developing SMART will greatly assist the Agency's plans to promote the development of small and medium-sized reactors in the future. My country is fully disposed to share its knowledge and experience in nuclear technology research and development within the framework of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme.

Nuclear safety is of paramount importance in the use of nuclear energy. While sharing the view that every country should maintain the highest possible level of nuclear safety through rigorous national measures, we also believe that international cooperation on safety-related matters is indispensable. On the one hand, each country should take concrete steps to relieve public concern about the operational safety of nuclear power plants and the disposal of radioactive waste. On the other, the IAEA should further promote international cooperation to create a set of rules and standards for nuclear safety.

For many years, my Government has made every effort to instil a nuclear-safety culture within society aimed at cultivating public acceptance. My Government is undertaking procedures to ratify the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management in the near future. We also hope for a speedy conclusion of the international discussions concerning the safety of radioactive sources and the safe transport of radioactive materials.

The IAEA safeguards system constitutes an indispensable component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. My Government has therefore consistently supported the IAEA's efforts to strengthen its safeguards system. In particular, we welcome the adoption by the IAEA of the Model Additional

Protocol in May 1997. The Protocol will significantly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards regime, while ensuring the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities. My Government signed the Additional Protocol in June 1999 and is currently undertaking domestic measures to ratify it next year. My delegation wishes to underline the importance of the universal application of the Additional Protocol.

We look forward to a timely establishment by the IAEA of an integrated safeguards system. Meanwhile, the Republic of Korea has been implementing its own national inspection system since 1997, in close cooperation with the IAEA.

Since 1993, the General Conference of the IAEA has adopted resolutions on the nuclear issue relating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The resolution adopted at the forty-fourth session of the General Conference of the Agency, inter alia, urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to come into full compliance with its safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. We commend the continued impartial efforts of the Agency to resolve this issue and look forward to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's full compliance with its safeguards Agreement. As reflected in resolution GC(44)/RES/26 of 22 September 2000, we welcome the recent positive developments in North-East Asia and hope that they will provide a good opportunity to resolve outstanding issues, including the nuclear issue relating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

My delegation welcomes the successful outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which set a pragmatic nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda for the next five years. We are pleased to note that the Conference reaffirmed the IAEA's role as the primary facilitator of technical cooperation and nuclear safety and as a guardian of nuclear non-proliferation. My Government looks forward to the full implementation of the benchmarks contained in the Final Document.

In order to cope with the challenges faced by the nuclear industry, we need a large pool of committed young professionals with high morals, technical competence and a strong belief in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As part of the effort to develop such a pool, the Republic of Korea will host the second Youth Nuclear Congress in 2002, following the first held in Slovakia last April. This Congress will serve as a forum for the young generation to understand and exchange views on the importance of nuclear energy.

In closing, my delegation would like to reassert the firm commitment of the Republic of Korea to the objectives of the IAEA and its strong support for the work of the Agency.

Mr. Kobayashi (Japan): On behalf of the Government of Japan, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Ibrahim Othman of the Syrian Arab Republic for the excellent manner in which he conducted his presidency of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) at its forty-fourth session. My thanks go as well to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the IAEA, for his thorough presentation of the IAEA report. I also extend my Government's welcome to the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Central African Republic, which have newly become members of the IAEA.

Japan greatly appreciates the IAEA's role in fostering and strengthening international cooperation towards the peaceful use of nuclear energy, nuclear safety and nuclear non-proliferation. In order for the IAEA to continue fulfilling its universal role, Japan hopes that the amendments to article VI of the IAEA statute concerning the enlargement of the membership of the Board of Governors, as approved by the General Conference last year, will become effective promptly.

Japan will continue to cooperate fully with the IAEA in the area of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Building on the experiences it has gained thus far in this important field, the Government of Japan is currently finalizing its long-term plan for research, development and utilization of nuclear energy, which outlines its basic policy and long-term vision to fully utilize the multifaceted potential of nuclear power. Strictly observing the principles of peaceful use and safety, my Government remains committed to the advancement of nuclear-power generation and the establishment of a nuclear fuel cycle. In doing so, Japan will continue to attach great importance to transparency in its nuclear activities and intends to keep the international community, through relevant international organizations, including the IAEA, informed of its policies, as well as of the situation regarding the use of plutonium.

As my delegation mentioned in the debate in the Fourth Committee under agenda item 82, "Effects of atomic radiation", Japan's policy of promoting the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy extends to international cooperation, both bilaterally as well as through the IAEA and other competent international organizations. As the only country to have suffered a nuclear attack, and as a country that has long been committed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, Japan is determined to use its wealth of experience for the greater benefit of humankind.

Japan attaches particular importance to assisting the people affected by the accident at Chernobyl, and has contributed to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund. In addition, as the current chair of the Group of Seven Nuclear Safety Working Group, Japan has worked to coordinate the views of its members in such areas as the development of alternative sources of electric power and the creation of employment opportunities in the wake of the Chernobyl plant closure.

The people of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan are also a focus of concern. Last year the Government of Japan, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), convened the Tokyo International Conference on Semipalatinsk, at which it announced that it would extend bilateral official development assistance in the medical field. Based on an agreement it reached with the Government of Kazakhstan in March this year, it will provide medical equipment and technical cooperation to improve the health standards of people in the region. It also decided, in conjunction with the UNDP, to extend assistance for the economic rehabilitation of the region through the human development Fund and the Fund to assist women in developing countries.

Allow me to briefly highlight some aspects of the activities of the IAEA that we deem to be particularly important. The IAEA plays an important role in the area of nuclear non-proliferation through its safeguards system. The international community must further strengthen its efforts to promote the universalization of the Additional Protocol to the IAEA Safeguards Agreements, which in our view is an integral part of the safeguards system. From this point of view, we are very satisfied with the adoption this year of IAEA resolution GC(44)/RES/19, "Strengthening the Effectiveness and Improving the Efficiency of the Safeguards System and Application of the Model Protocol," which includes a plan of action to bring the safeguards agreements and additional protocols into force. We call on the Director General as well as the Board of Governors and member States to implement this plan promptly.

In order to promote the conclusion of the Additional Protocol, the Government of Japan intends to make extra-budgetary contributions to the Secretariat of the IAEA. We would also like to express our readiness to host, together with the IAEA, a workshop for the Asia-Pacific region next year on the universalization of the Additional Protocol. We believe the workshop will provide the States that have concluded the Additional Protocol with an opportunity to offer their expertise to help the countries that have not yet done so to understand the significance of concluding the Additional Protocol. Japan will vigorously continue its efforts, in cooperation with all like-minded member States as well as with the IAEA, to make the Additional Protocol universal.

Japan welcomes the positive developments on the Korean peninsula that the world has been witnessing recently. Less than a week ago in this very Hall, a draft resolution jointly presented by the delegations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea was adopted by consensus. Japan was pleased to sponsor the draft resolution, and hopes that it will prove to be yet another milestone in the process of reconciliation and cooperation between the two Koreas.

In light of these positive developments, it is all the more important for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully cooperate with the IAEA in the implementation of its safeguards agreement, so as to further strengthen the atmosphere of cooperation and reconciliation. We strongly hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will respond positively to IAEA resolution GC(44)/RES/26, "Implementation of the Agreement between the Agency and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons." Japan, for its part, has been actively participating in the light-water reactor project of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, which has an important role to play in promoting IAEA activities on the Korean peninsula.

In concluding, I reiterate my Government's strong commitment to and support for the activities of the IAEA.

Mr. Soeriaatmadja (Indonesia): On behalf of the Indonesian delegation, it is a pleasure for me to express our sincere appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the Agency's report and the comprehensive statement highlighting its role and activities. The period covered by the report has confirmed that the Director General, with professionalism and dedication, has further strengthened the role of the IAEA in the field of nuclear energy.

We are particularly grateful to the Director General for drawing our attention to the Agency's three main areas of functions — as a modality for the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, as the recognized authority supporting intergovernmental efforts to strengthen nuclear safety around the world and as an indispensable instrument in moving forward the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament agenda. Indonesia welcomes this unified approach, based on the three pillars of technology, safety and verification.

It is now universally recognized that the IAEA is the international community's principal modality for the utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Among its most important aspects is the generation of electricity to meet the growing energy demands of the future. For reasons of energy security, countries with limited fossil fuel resources should be encouraged to diversify their energy supply systems to include both renewable and non-renewable sources in ensuring national development on a sustainable basis. In the context of these considerations and the goals of the Kyoto Protocol, the Agency deserves our commendation for its efforts in providing information and training on the potential role of nuclear power under the Clean Development Mechanism.

In this regard as well, collective efforts with the assistance of the Agency should be made towards appropriate technical solutions in providing safe and reliable energy at affordable rates, especially for the developing countries. Again, we are grateful to the Agency for its assistance in introducing nuclear power through the use of small and medium-size reactors as a viable option to generate electricity.

In this regard I draw attention to the meeting between our President, His Excellency Abdurrahman Wahid, and the Director General of the IAEA in December last year. At that meeting the President affirmed his support for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in meeting the basic needs of the people. The President also stressed that his Government has an open mind towards the utilization of nuclear energy as an alternative source in the future.

Ensuring a high level of nuclear safety throughout the world is of primary importance to Indonesia. Safety aspects must be taken into account at an early stage in the design of nuclear facilities. We agree with the widely held view that, while responsibility for the safe design, construction and operation of a nuclear installation rests with the State having jurisdiction over such an installation, cooperation among States is needed to ensure that internationally accepted levels of nuclear safety are in place everywhere. While noteworthy advances have been made, much still remains to be done. It is important that the contracting parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety at the next Review Meeting make substantial progress in areas requiring safety improvements. In this context, Indonesia recently promulgated two regulations, one on nuclear and radiation safety and the other on nuclear energy utilization, intended to facilitate implementation of the New International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources.

In its continuing quest for the further strengthening of the non-proliferation regime and for a world free from the dangers posed by nuclear weapons, Indonesia has signed the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. I should like to point out in this regard that Indonesia is among the first few countries to have ratified and implemented the Protocol. This is in recognition of the Agency's critical role in safeguarding nuclear materials and facilities to prevent their theft or diversion for military purposes, which calls for the universal conclusion of Additional Protocols.

At the regional level, Indonesia actively participated in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN)-IAEA workshop on the implementation of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, held in Bangkok this year, and proposed the establishment of the ASEAN

safeguards system in order to comply with the requirements stipulated in the Treaty. It is our expectation that the proposed safeguards system could make a significant contribution to further strengthening mutual trust and confidence among members of ASEAN and also reinforce provisions concerning programmes for safeguards.

As far as research reactor technology is concerned, our scientists and engineers in the National Atomic Energy Agency (BATAN) have successfully increased the capacity of the nuclear reactor in Bandung. Another research reactor was inaugurated last June by the Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia. These complex undertakings have been successfully carried out by our own engineers after participating in various technical cooperation programmes initiated by the IAEA, for which we thank the Agency.

The Technical Cooperation Programme is one of the most valuable components of the activities undertaken by the IAEA. It has greatly benefited Indonesia in developing its human resource capabilities, scientific-technical facilities and supportive infrastructure deemed important for our national priorities in areas such as health, industry, agriculture, livestock production and environment. We have already expressed our willingness to share our expertise and scientific facilities and exchange our experiences with other developing countries. The Programme's consummation, however, will depend on the Agency's efforts to promote South-South cooperation in addition to the existing North-South framework. In this context, we appeal to the Agency to further continue to explore the possibility of introducing new and innovative programmes for the developing countries.

We also gratefully acknowledge the support extended by the Agency to Indonesia's Nuclear Energy Control Board in convening two regional workshops, the first on "Strengthening National Capabilities to Respond to Radiological Emergencies" and the second on "The Development of a Legal Framework Governing the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material". In our view, the holding of these two workshops was timely and appropriate for the Asia-Pacific region, as they contributed not only to an awareness of the problems involved, but also to developing the region's own capabilities in responding to any radiological emergencies. We look forward to such activities in the future on various aspects of radiation safety and safeguards tailored to the specific needs of our region.

It should be emphasized that such cooperative activities implemented through effective programmes would contribute significantly to improving the scientific, technological and regulatory capabilities of the developing countries. My delegation welcomes the Technical Cooperation Strategy and the concept of "partner in development", including the country programme framework and thematic planning through the application of Model Project criteria. The adoption of these approaches by the Agency is in full conformity with the policy and strategy of the Government of Indonesia in giving a sharper focus on and greater emphasis to the advantages for the end-users and the socio-economic impact of science and technology, rather than on the output generated solely by research and development. Accordingly, our National Atomic Energy Agency has successfully developed partnerships with various ministries, provincial governments, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector for the development and application of nuclear techniques for the improvement of our people's welfare and well-being.

Let me take this opportunity to reaffirm that Indonesia has greatly benefited from the assistance received from the Agency. We look forward to further intensified cooperation through the Technical Cooperation Programme and in the framework of regional cooperative agreements.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item today. The remaining speakers will be heard tomorrow morning.

I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Hong Je Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wishes to exercise its right

of reply with regard to the references to the so-called nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula by the Director General of the IAEA and by some countries in their statements.

As is well known, the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is not an issue to be discussed at the United Nations. The nuclear issues is a political and military issue to be resolved bilaterally between the Democratic Republic of Korea and the United States in light of its origin, as well as in view of its nature. The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula will be resolved when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Agreed Framework is fully implemented. It is therefore unfair and biased to request the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to implement this or that provision at the United Nations. This kind of approach will not help resolve the issue. If countries are truly interested in resolving this issue, they should encourage and promote the implementation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Agreed Framework.

Let me also briefly respond to the statement made by the South Korean representative. The reference to the nuclear issue by the South Korean side, which knows much better than others that the issue is to be resolved between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, gives rise to much suspicion on our part. We hope that the South Korean side will give up its notion of confrontation if it is sincere in its intention to achieve confidence and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula. We also deplore the double-faced approach of Japan to this issue and strongly urge Japan to settle the issue of its past crimes against the Korean people as quickly as possible before talking about this issue.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to remind delegations that, as reflected in today's *Journal*, agenda item 44, "Global implications of the year 2000 date conversion problem of computers", will not be taken up tomorrow morning, and is postponed to a later date to be announced soon.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/55/PV.53

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

53rd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 7 November 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mungra (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency (A/55/284 and Corr.1)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.25)

Amendment (A/55/L.26/Rev.1)

Amendment (A/55/L.27)

Ms. Chin Powles (New Zealand): My delegation wishes to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. ElBaradei, for his introduction of the report of the Agency for 1999. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) gave the Director General and his team a resounding vote of confidence. The Agency has New Zealand's unqualified support for its important work in carrying out its mandate fully and professionally. New Zealand attaches special significance to two pillars of the Agency's work. They are the contribution that it makes to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament through its safeguards and verification role, and its activities in promoting a global nuclear safety culture. Although much has been achieved, there is still much to be done in both areas.

New Zealand was among the first to bring into force a protocol additional to our safeguards agreement with the Agency. The slow growth in adherence to the strengthened safeguards system is a source of disappointment. Certainly the number of signatories is growing — around 53 by last count — but with fewer than half of the protocols in force, more determined effort is required if universal adherence, and the assurance of non-proliferation it would confer, are to be achieved.

New Zealand applauds the recent developments on the Korean peninsula, but again we must record our concern about the lack of progress on safeguards implementation issues in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We hope that the new climate that is prevailing in that country will move it to cooperate fully with the Agency in coming into full compliance with its safeguards agreement, which remains binding and in force.

Since December 1998, the Agency has not been in a position to implement its mandate in Iraq under the relevant Security Council resolutions, and there is thus no assurance of compliance with those resolutions. The Agency's visit to Iraq in January pursuant to Iraq's safeguards agreement was welcome, but it did not constitute a substitute.

New Zealand's concern about the effect of nuclear-related accidents on humanity and our environment runs deep. We therefore support strongly the Agency's work to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear radiation and waste safety, and

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the assistance it is able to give in the event of an accident. New Zealand has done everything it can to minimize the risks of nuclear-related accidents in our own country and in our region. But we remain vulnerable to the effects of a nuclear-related accident because of the maritime transport of radioactive materials.

At this year's General Conference New Zealand, along with a group of co-sponsors from a wide range of geographic regions, was responsible for a resolution on the safety of transport of radioactive materials. That resolution, while perhaps not as strong as we would all have liked, moved the issue forward in a useful and balanced way. We were particularly pleased that it was possible to secure a successful outcome by consensus on a subject to which New Zealanders and others in our immediate region attach such importance.

The international community has high expectations of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It can only continue to fulfil those expectations if Member States ensure that the Director General has the resources and the support to meet the challenges the membership establishes for the Agency. New Zealand for its part will continue to contribute constructively in support of the Agency's extremely important work.

Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania): At the outset, I wish to thank Director General Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei for his comprehensive and excellent report on the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We also wish to express our appreciation for the Agency's outstanding performance, and we commend his dedicated and effective leadership.

Lithuania has aligned itself with the European Union statement delivered yesterday in connection with this agenda item. Apart from that, I wish to take this opportunity to outline a number of specific issues.

The report of the Director General, transmitted in document A/55/284, comprehensively and fairly reflects the wide range of issues that have been the focus of the Agency's attention over the last year. The aspect of the IAEA's activities to which Lithuania attaches special importance is its work in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Against the background of growing energy demands world-wide, Lithuania concurs with the Director General that there are various opinions on the future of nuclear power. Nuclear power can help to meet global energy needs in a sustainable and environmentally conscious manner. Yet, much still needs to be done to increase economic competitiveness, advance technologies and, in particular, to improve public confidence.

Over a number of years, Lithuania has been among the leading countries in terms of the share of nuclear energy in its total energy production. Bilateral and multilateral assistance provided by donor countries, and regional and national technical cooperation projects of the IAEA, have helped elevate the safety level of the Ignalina nuclear power plant to internationally recognized safety standards.

Safety improvements notwithstanding, the parliament of Lithuania earlier this year took the decision to shut down one of the two nuclear reactors by 2005. The estimated cost of decommissioning runs to more than $1 billion, and the overall cost of decommissioning plus the treatment and storage of radioactive waste and used nuclear fuel could reach $3.5 billion. Given such an enormous financial burden, timely decommissioning could well depend on considerable long-term financial and technical assistance from the international community.

The first international donor conference, which took place in Lithuania in June 2000, marked the beginning of a long process. I wish wholeheartedly to thank Governments of the European Union, the Group of Seven and other interested States, financial institutions and the IAEA for their pledges and commitments with respect to the decommissioning of the Ignalina nuclear power plant. It is extremely important that the participation of the international community in managing the issues of decommissioning be long-term and continuous.

In that regard, we wish to underline the importance of IAEA activities. Lithuania has benefited greatly from technical cooperation programmes in recent years. Now, we look forward to having a new project approved under the technical cooperation programme, whereby the IAEA would provide long-term technical assistance in decommissioning Unit 1.

We attach utmost importance to the safety of the reactor during the phase-out period. Lithuania has taken steps to ensure high standards of safety while decommissioning the reactor. The main safety criteria are set out in the general requirements for the decommissioning of the Ignalina nuclear power plant,

which were drafted on the basis of documents of the IAEA and the International Commission on Radiological Protection, as well as European Union directives. Last year, Lithuania took advantage of missions by the International Physical Protection Advisory Service and the International Probabilistic Safety Assessments Review Team, which strengthened our confidence in our safety measures and criteria.

The vital role that the IAEA has been playing over many years in promoting international cooperation to strengthen nuclear safety and the culture of safety is to be commended. The IAEA has spared no effort to develop internationally recognized safety standards and guidelines and legally binding international conventions with regard to nuclear safety and radiation protection. In that respect, we wish to note the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, which was recently ratified by Lithuania.

Apart from safety, the serious issue of the management of radioactive waste and spent fuel will remain on the agenda for the longer term. Minimizing the amount of nuclear waste and improving its segregation and treatment are the main objectives of our review of a national approach to radioactive waste management. In that task Lithuania is following the guidelines and principles of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. We strongly support and encourage the Agency's work on waste minimization, especially during decommissioning operations.

The Agency's continuing work in the field of sustainable energy strategies must also be commended. Over the years the Agency has developed substantial expertise. Its data, information and analysis help national decision-makers to take well-considered decisions on how best to meet the energy needs of their countries. The Agency's role in research and development projects on innovative nuclear fuel cycles and power plants is also to be noted.

The debate on the future of nuclear power should not be confined to sustainable development but should be extended also to climate change. In that regard, the development of small and medium-sized reactors that could be competitive in their own right is to be encouraged so as to keep all options open for the future expansion of electricity supply systems in countries that lack sufficient alternative energy resources.

The international community's resolve to advance the non-proliferation regime was demonstrated during the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The States parties to the NPT clearly acknowledged that the non-proliferation regime could hardly be effective without input from the Agency. Lithuania commends and strongly supports the work of the Agency in its pursuit of universal signature of additional safeguards protocols. Lithuania was one of the first States to sign an additional protocol, and we ratified ours this year.

The creation of a strengthened safeguards system has yet to restore confidence in the system. We must ensure that the Agency has the financial and human resources it needs to carry out its responsibilities and improve its ability to detect the diversion of fissile materials and other undeclared activities. In this regard, we commend the Agency's efforts to strengthen the overall safeguards system. The increased use of short-notice inspections and the development of advanced verification technologies have proved to be of particular value in this respect. However, IAEA safeguards can be effective only so long as all States honour their commitments.

The number of States without comprehensive safeguards agreements raises concerns. However, it is even more worrisome that the IAEA has not been able so far to carry out its Security-Council-mandated activities in Iraq or to provide assurances regarding the correctness and completeness of the initial declaration of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We hope that the latest positive developments regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will soon find their way into the area of safeguards.

Finally, I wish to reiterate that Lithuania looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the IAEA, which we value so highly. The Agency can count on Lithuania's constructive support. Lithuania has sponsored draft resolutions on the report of the IAEA for a number of years. We will do our utmost to support the draft resolution introduced by Nigeria; we strongly wish to see it adopted by consensus.

Mr. Ivanov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish at the outset to thank the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr.

Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the report of the Agency. My delegation has carefully studied the report, and highly appreciates its excellent quality.

Because of the ever-increasing pace of technological progress, economic globalization and the specialization of production, and because of the increasing interdependence among States, Governments must develop extensive energy infrastructures to meet the growing demand for electricity. Given the limits of traditional energy sources, it was necessary to find a new way of safely providing affordable energy. That way was the peaceful use of nuclear power. But we know from bitter experience that even the peaceful atom has caused terrible tragedies with world-shaking consequences.

Under those circumstances, the work of the IAEA, one of the most extraordinary and highly respected international organizations, is extremely important. We believe that the IAEA is playing a more important role than ever before in guaranteeing the non-proliferation regime, in creating safe systems for current nuclear installations, and in providing scientific and technical assistance to its member States.

Belarus has always supported the work of the IAEA aimed at guaranteeing the non-proliferation regime and has consistently advocated the strengthening of that regime. This is evidenced by the fact that my country has signed, and is strictly implementing the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Safeguards Agreement. This year, our Republic joined the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Guided by the principles of non-proliferation, Belarus of course complies with all the commitments entered into under the Safeguards Agreement. Experts in my country are now completing the process of studying the protocol additional to the Safeguards Agreement with a view to signing it. In this respect, we are grateful to the Agency for organizing in Minsk a special seminar on sharing experience on working to implement the additional protocol.

Our delegation would like to inform the General Assembly that Belarus has now carried out a number of elements on the strengthened safeguards system. Agency inspectors have annual visas and are able to gain access so that they can take samples from the surfaces of hot chambers. The Government has made a decision about a remote monitoring system at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus Scientific and Technical Centre in Sosny. We are also participating in the open-ended working group to discuss the possibility and advisability of reviewing the 1980 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

Should the States Parties adopt an agreed and positive decision in this regard, Belarus will seek to ensure that due account is given to the interests of countries that do not have adequate institutional and financial resources in order to help to improve their national protection systems. Our country is also actively participating in the IAEA programme to combat the illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radioactive sources. We believe that it is now urgently necessary to develop a single conceptual approach to establishing radiation standards. As many speakers have noted, introducing such common standards, to replace the various standards that now apply, would help countries to combat trafficking in nuclear materials and also facilitate the trade in and transport of goods across borders.

Another important aspect of IAEA work is ensuring maximum security for currently operative nuclear energy and nuclear technology installations. Our people paid an enormous price in learning how important it is to ensure the safety of technology. As a result of the Chernobyl disaster thousands of adults and children are suffering from a variety of cancers, much of our fertile land has been taken out of production and our State has been forced to spend more than it spends on national defence simply to deal with the consequences of our disaster. In this context, we are grateful to the IAEA for the practical assistance that is has provided in the past and that it is still providing under the technical cooperation programme.

Belarus supports the IAEA's proposal for partnership for development and approves of the current three-pronged strategy for technical cooperation based on model projects, national framework programmes and thematic planning. We are particularly impressed by the fact that each IAEA project is geared towards actual concrete output.

Having carefully studied the report, we must point out that one of the most striking consequences of radiation accidents is fear of radioactivity on the part

of the public. This can be overcome only by proving that nuclear power can be used safely to help people, both in theory and in practice. On the theoretical side, we must encourage more scientific research on a new generation of nuclear power plants that is much safer, even in emergency situations, and more efficient. We hope that the IAEA will accord even more attention in future to developing this area of nuclear science.

We are very concerned about the tendency of young scientists and specialists with nuclear expertise to leave our countries. We believe that the safe functioning of our nuclear power structures will not be possible if we do not have highly educated and talented young people working in this area. To some extent this problem is due to a certain stagnation in efforts to find new applications for nuclear energy and to improve existing technology.

In conclusion, the delegation of Belarus would like to commend the work of the Agency and support the main areas of future activity. We hope that there will be close cooperation with the Agency in resolving all problems relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear power.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): First of all, I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to extend our congratulations to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his leadership and for the effective manner in which he is steering the work of the IAEA.

Pakistan remains firmly committed to the goals and objectives of the International Atomic Energy Agency. As a founding member of the IAEA, we are glad to note that the it remains among the most efficiently run organizations in the entire United Nations system. The tasks assigned to it are scientifically challenging, technically complex, politically sensitive and financially demanding. The IAEA's statutory objective that the Agency shall seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world, gives it a unique and multifaceted role in the process of economic development.

We acknowledge with appreciation the IAEA's role in helping Pakistan to benefit from the peaceful use of the atom in fields ranging from nuclear power production to agriculture. Through its technical assistance, the IAEA has contributed to our efforts at establishing a base of professional manpower, research institutes, training facilities, medical centres and other technical services in the field of the peaceful uses of the atom.

For its part, Pakistan has provided training opportunities to many IAEA nominees. Our experience with the peaceful uses of technology is being shared with other developing countries only under IAEA auspices. We believe that such interactions among the developing countries will further strengthen the spirit of technical cooperation among developing countries.

Pakistan's impeccable record in terms of nuclear safety and safeguards, its participation in the Agency's promotional activities and its active and constructive role in the IAEA's policy-making organs reflect our abiding commitment to the promotion of the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

The promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is the *raison d'être* of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The world is steadily requiring more energy. Energy multiplies human labour, increasing productivity. World population surpassed the 6 billion mark last year. Yet one third of that number — 2 billion people — lack access to electricity. Development depends on energy, and the alternative to development is poverty and suffering.

The energy demand cannot be met by fossil fuel alone, as this would place an unacceptable burden on the environment. The massive development of hydropower is one option. The only other proven and sustainable option is the use of nuclear energy. We feel that opposition to nuclear power, despite its good safety record and environmentally friendly character, is either based on misunderstanding or is a deliberate pretext to deny this technology to developing countries.

Pakistan, in view of the limitations of its fossil fuel and hydropower resources, is keen to make increasingly large use of nuclear power to meet its future electricity requirements.

Moreover, as a large part of current power-generation requirements are being met through the use of oil, huge oil-import bills are incurred. In order to diversify the country's power-generation system and reduce its dependence on energy imports, increasing the use of nuclear power is a desirable option for Pakistan. In this context, we duly acknowledge the cooperation extended by the IAEA in the construction

phase of our second nuclear plant at Chashma, which is under IAEA full safeguards.

A high-profile "safety culture" is an indispensable component of any successful nuclear power programme. The lessons of Chernobyl must not be forgotten in the context of the safe development of nuclear energy. We are pleased that the IAEA has played a very important role in providing information and advice to all its members on safety-related issues. Pakistan has ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety, as we believe that this Convention has an important role in improving the safety culture of States parties. We call upon all countries with nuclear power programmes that have not already done so to accede to, and ratify, the Convention immediately and thus enhance nuclear safety worldwide.

The implementation of nuclear safeguards agreements constitutes an important facet of the IAEA's activities. We are satisfied at the fact that during 1999, the IAEA's vast safeguards-related activities, extending to 900 facilities in some 70 countries and involving more than 10,000 person/days of inspection, show that the nuclear material and other items declared and placed under Agency safeguards were used in peaceful nuclear activities and were adequately accounted for. For its part, Pakistan has faithfully discharged its safeguards obligations under its agreements of the INFCIRC/66 category with the Agency.

Seen in the context of the IAEA's statutory obligations and the aspirations of a vast majority of its membership, technical cooperation and the transfer of technology remain at the heart of the IAEA's promotional role. We are not satisfied that, as compared to the projected $73 million, the voluntary Technical Cooperation Fund has received only $64 million. While lauding the Agency's positive role in technical cooperation, we urge that this aspect of the IAEA's work be further strengthened.

It is important, for the credibility of the IAEA and for ensuring widespread benefits from the peaceful uses of the atom, that the IAEA maintain its focus on its technical promotional character. As such, we are concerned to note that there has been a visible shift in emphasis towards the verification role of IAEA. This trend needs to be countered and corrected and the balance restored. Of course, safeguards constitute a basic function of the Agency. But safeguards provide only a legal framework for pursuing the primary objective of the IAEA, namely the promotion of peaceful uses of atomic energy.

We expect the Agency to adopt non-discriminatory measures in providing access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Agency's primary purpose is to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear power under technically safe conditions, not to serve as a nuclear policeman.

Pakistan remains committed to the goals of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Pakistan has historically supported all proposals and agreements aimed at the limitation, progressive reduction and eventual elimination of weapons of mass destruction. For over a quarter-century, we made efforts and initiated proposals to keep South Asia free of nuclear weapons. Those efforts collapsed in the face of the Indian nuclear tests conducted in May 1998.

It is a well-known fact that the Indian nuclear-weapon programme developed and matured on the basis of the illicit acquisition of sensitive technology and a not-so-secret rechannelling of India's nuclear power programme, in blatant disregard of its international commitments and obligations. For many years, it professed to have a peaceful nuclear programme. Subsequent developments, however, clearly exposed the wide gap that has always existed between its words and deeds.

The enormity of the resultant threat to our security forced us to conduct our own nuclear tests to restore a strategic balance and maintain peace in the region. Restraint and responsibility remain the guiding principles of our nuclear policy. We have announced a unilateral moratorium on further testing and emphasize the need to prevent a nuclear arms race.

We have also proposed to India the establishment of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia. During the past year, we have further strengthened our already stringent domestic regulations against the export of nuclear equipment or materials.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation would like to welcome the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, and thanks him for introducing the Agency's latest report to us.

In our view, the IAEA report provides an objective picture of the multifaceted work of the Agency, covering such key areas as ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons through its monitoring functions and promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy for development. The Russian Federation believes it important to work with the IAEA to develop the peaceful use of nuclear energy. One noteworthy example of this was the signing in March this year of the protocol additional to the safeguards agreement between Russia and the IAEA. We are ready to continue doing our utmost to strengthen the Agency's policy-making and scientific potential.

The Agency report is being issued after the successful completion of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Russia, as one of the depositories for the NPT, is pleased that the documents adopted at the Review Conference set forth a detailed agenda for furthering nuclear disarmament. We believe that the Conference's success derived from achieving a carefully calibrated balance of interests in the final document. Now, if we want that document to be effective, we have to preserve that balance without upsetting it for the benefit of this or that national position.

It is also important to realistically assess the situation. Further reductions of strategic offensive weapons can be achieved only in close concurrence with the preservation and strengthening of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Preservation of the 1972 ABM Treaty, which is the keystone of global strategic stability, opens the possibility of concluding a START III agreement that provides for lower levels of warheads for each of the parties — 15,000 each.

NPT Conference decisions certainly enhance the role and the status of the IAEA as a universal organ for cooperation among States in the nuclear field. In our view, the main tasks facing the Agency in the twenty-first century are, on the one hand, facilitating international cooperation to provide for economically sound and environmentally safe uses of weapons-grade materials in civilian nuclear fuel cycles and, on the other hand, helping to develop new nuclear technologies that cannot be used for weapons purposes.

The Agency is already working hard on monitoring the use of fissionable materials generated by weapons programmes. We place great stock in the joint work being carried out by the experts of Russia, the United States and the IAEA, under the framework of the 1996 trilateral agreement, as regards applying Agency monitoring to fissile materials from weapons sources. The work is proceeding in accordance with the schedule approved by the three parties.

As for establishing innovative technologies that would be safe in terms of nuclear weapons proliferation, much remains to be done in this area. At the Millennium Summit, our President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, proposed a means of ensuring the energy needed for sustainable development, both fundamentally resolving the problem of nuclear-weapons proliferation and improving the health of the global environment. The Russian proposal is aimed at gradually excluding the basic weapons-grade materials — enriched uranium and pure plutonium — from being used in the production of peaceful nuclear energy. We have done research in our country that shows there is a real possibility of producing nuclear energy without these weapons-grade materials. Moreover there appears to be a possibility of burning plutonium and other elements so as to ensure that these wastes can be returned to the Earth's crust without disrupting the natural radioactivity of the Earth. This would put an end to the negative impact of nuclear energy on the environment and solve definitively the problem of radioactive wastes.

We are pleased that in September 2000, at the IAEA General Conference, the Director General supported the Russian proposal. Work has now begun on its practical implementation. In this regard the IAEA has decided to establish an ad hoc group on innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles. The first meeting of this group will be held at the end of November 6, 2000.

I would like to stress that the Russian proposal does not mean the immediate renunciation of the current nuclear fuel cycle and the shutting down of all operating nuclear power plants. What we envisage is broad international cooperation so that together we can develop future-oriented innovative reactor technology.

We are pleased that the draft resolution on the IAEA report invites interested Member States to work together under the aegis of the Agency to consider these matters. We also support IAEA efforts to prevent trafficking in nuclear materials, so as to raise the level of physical protection and develop national accounting

and monitoring systems for nuclear materials. We support broadening cooperation among States so as to stop nuclear smuggling.

The Agency's work to provide technical cooperation to developing countries so that they can implement priority programmes relating to the peaceful use of nuclear energy is vitally important to Russia. We actively participate in the Agency's technical cooperation programmes by providing equipment and organizing and conducting training courses and seminars for specialists from developing countries.

At the same time, we think it important that the Agency support countries with economies in transition, above all with eliminating the consequences of technological disasters. We support continuing international community assistance to countries that are suffering from the after-effects of the Chernobyl accident. We welcome the decision by the President of Ukraine to finally close this nuclear power plant.

We note the positive political changes occurring in the Korean peninsula. Despite efforts to ignore these changes at the IAEA General Conference, a resolution was adopted regarding these changes. We hope that positive shifts in this region will help to ensure full implementation of the safeguards agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Agency.

In conclusion, let me join others in expressing approval of the IAEA annual report and in expressing the hope that a consensus draft resolution containing the results of this review will be prepared.

Mr. Salazar (Peru) *(spoke in Spanish)*: My delegation wishes to express its satisfaction with the comprehensive report by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, which confirms once again the efficient performance of the Organization and the Director General's successful leadership of a group of able professionals, committed to the cause of nuclear safety and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Peru, which is in one of the first nuclear-weapon-free zones, places great importance on the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in the realization of the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), confirmed at the last Conference of the parties to this important international instrument promoting total nuclear disarmament. The IAEA also has an important role in the application of the guarantees and safeguards to which States possessing nuclear energy must commit themselves, since nuclear energy has a dual character, threatening but at the same time with ever greater applications for the social development of peoples.

Nevertheless, I would like to refer to the third pillar in the Agency's work: technical cooperation with developing countries to give them the many possibilities offered by the peaceful use of nuclear energy, with its social impact.

With respect to my country and subregion, I wish to refer to IAEA's support for the development plan for the Peru-Ecuador border area for the period 2001-2002, with the approval of two projects, one in the area of nuclear medicine, which is to receive significant funding, and the other on the application of isotopic techniques in hydrology. The latter has been approved as a regional project, in which Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay also participate. The Agency has allotted $2 million to this project.

The official visit of the Director General of the Agency to Peru in October 1999 strengthened the relationship between the Agency and my country, which was confirmed at the highest level. That visit enabled us to inform the Agency about the various activities for the peaceful use of nuclear energy carried out in my country. Furthermore, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on technical cooperation with the IAEA on 18 October made it possible to make our country a sort of regional technical cooperation centre, using the Instituto Peruano de Energia Nuclear (IPEN) as a regional subcontractor, in recognition of the Institute's work as a nuclear research centre, as well as a producer of technological services. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding is timely, in the context of a regional workshop on technical cooperation programmes for the region for the period 2001-2002, as well as the preparatory work for drawing up programmes for the next biennium.

Lastly, I would like to draw attention to the support given by the International Atomic Energy Agency in offering my country a regional seminar to promote the Additional Protocol, to be held in Lima in 2001, which will also enjoy the support of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and

Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), which has its headquarters in Mexico.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform Members that action on draft resolution A/55/L.25 and the amendments thereto will be taken on Friday, 10 November 2000, as the last item on the agenda.

Agenda item 27

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/498)

The President: The first speaker is the representative of Togo, who will make a statement on behalf of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Kpotsra (Togo) *(spoke in French)*: In his address to the General Assembly at this session, President Eyadéma, current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), placed particular stress on, among other things, the need for the international community to resolutely support the tireless efforts made by African countries to find lasting solutions to the enormous problems that they still face several decades after attaining sovereignty.

The particularly difficult situation in which African States find themselves is marked by a notable lack of stability, decaying national economies and a continually worsening health situation. This situation, exacerbated by the perverse effects of globalization, in Africa should naturally lead the international community to enhance its cooperation with African countries.

In this context, the United Nations clearly remains the most appropriate framework for action. Through its bodies, its funds, its programmes and specialized agencies, the United Nations plays a leading role in the preservation of peace and peacekeeping, as well as in promoting development in Africa. The conditions in Africa today require that the world Organization be a catalyst for the assistance needed by African countries, by strengthening its cooperation with the OAU, the subregional organizations, African Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). That is why, before going further, I would like to warmly congratulate the Secretary-General on his report on cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations system in the past year.

Governed by the Agreement of 15 November 1965, updated on 9 October 1990, cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU has in recent years grown steadily. It covers such varied areas as conflict prevention, peacekeeping, electoral assistance, humanitarian aid and emergency relief, post-conflict reconstruction, the protection and promotion of human rights, access to information and communication technology, economic and social development, as well as managing refugee problems and demographic issues.

As is the case every year, the debate offers an opportunity to review what has been done in the different fields covered by this partnership in the previous year, and especially to identify possibilities to further deepen and strengthen the partnership.

With respect to peacekeeping and security, on which the United Nations undeniably has considerable experience, which it could use to help strengthen the capacity of the OAU and subregional organizations, we are pleased to note that the two organizations have continued to combine their efforts to settle and prevent conflicts in Africa.

Thus, under the tireless leadership of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, the OAU's mediation efforts in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea made it possible to conclude, on 18 June 2000, the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and the establishment and deployment by the Security Council of the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia under the terms of resolutions 1312 (2000) and 1320 (2000), which have been steadfastly supported by the United Nations. The final phase of the Mission, in which almost 4,200 troops will be deployed in both countries, will be launched shortly, according to the latest information. We hope that this momentum towards peace will continue and that a definitive settlement to this border dispute between the two countries will be found.

In Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, initiatives are under way involving both organizations.

Another important element of United Nations monitoring of African conflicts is the fact that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in close cooperation with the OAU Secretary-General, has appointed personal representatives or special envoys, inter alia, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia/Eritrea. This cooperation can also be seen in the United Nations support for African subregional organizations.

In this respect, I am pleased to note the establishment of such frameworks of cooperation as the coordination mechanism between the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Government of Sierra Leone. The first meeting of this mechanism, held here in New York on 11 September, allowed us to assess the peace process in Sierra Leone and to identify urgent measures to be taken in order to implement harmoniously the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the Lomé Peace Agreement.

In spite of everything, the prevention of conflicts remains, in our opinion, the focal point for cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. Indeed, it has been determined that the parties to a dispute tend to be less entrenched in the early stages and to be far more inclined to seek negotiated solutions than they are after violence erupts. Less costly from a human and financial point of view, prevention also offers the greatest possibilities of addressing the root causes of a dispute, thus providing a genuine opportunity to lay the basis of a lasting peace.

It is in this regard that, at the thirty-fifth OAU Summit in Algiers, the African heads of States and Government, having proclaimed the year 2000 as a year of peace, stability and development in Africa, are striving to join forces to prevent the emergence of new internal and inter-State conflicts and the political and social upheavals that are likely to lead to serious disturbances. The steps undertaken a few weeks ago on behalf of the pan-African organization by some 10 heads of State are part of this process and should be reinforced elsewhere and whenever necessary.

Our catchphrase should be "focus on preventive measures". In this respect, it is encouraging to note, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, that the Department of Political Affairs is working to that end with the OAU Secretary-General and that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has posted a military liaison officer to the OAU office in Addis Ababa in order to enhance information-sharing and coordination.

Similarly, we are pleased by the partnership established between the United Nations and the OAU through the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen OAU capacities in the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts and through the Trust Fund created to that end.

Africa's resolve to take control of its own affairs and the different lines of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU should not make us lose sight of the fact that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies with the Security Council. In this regard, the United Nations must firmly support the initiatives of African States to strengthen African capacity in peacekeeping and conflict settlement.

It is extremely distressing, however, to note that the international community has not always granted the kind of appropriate attention to the management of conflicts in Africa that it has always accorded to other regions of the world. Moreover, the efforts made by Africans themselves — I refer in particular to those undertaken pursuant to Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, such as the involvement of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone — are not given adequate financial and logistical support.

On the basis of this, the thirty-sixth OAU Summit, through the Lomé Declaration, invited the United Nations and the international community to accord the necessary attention to the management and settlement of conflicts in Africa and actively to support initiatives taken under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

We hope that a thorough review of the recommendations contained in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, led by Ambassador Brahimi, will allow the international community to find appropriate solutions to the problem of peace and security that remains the central concern of African countries.

The management of emergency humanitarian situations in Africa is another important area of interaction between the United Nations and the OAU. Emerging as a result of crises and conflicts between

and within States, the issue of refugees and displaced persons has grown in importance, while the resources allocated to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have been continuously on the decline.

In this regard, I cannot fail to welcome the extensive cooperation between the OAU and UNHCR, which led to a special OAU/UNHCR meeting of government and non-government technical experts in Conakry from 7 to 9 March on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The plan of action adopted at that meeting and later by the OAU Council of Ministers seeks to remedy the critical situation of refugees in Africa.

Moreover, natural disasters in Africa in recent years — flooding in Mozambique, the cyclone in Madagascar and drought in Ethiopia — have highlighted the need for Africa to coordinate its efforts to strengthen, with United Nations assistance, its capacities to respond more swiftly and effectively to emergencies and natural disasters.

In this regard, we would note that, in the 2000-2002 biennial action programme, drafted by the United Nations and the OAU at the conclusion of the meeting on cooperation held by their respective secretariats in Addis Ababa on 10 and 11 April, the two organizations agreed on concrete measures to strengthen cooperation between the OAU and the departments and competent bodies of the United Nations system, in particular the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The United Nations Children's Fund, through its actions in countries affected by war, such as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, has focused particular attention on meeting the needs of children in the framework of humanitarian assistance. Similarly, in cooperation with the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Food Programme has sought over the past year to assist African countries that have adopted national plans to improve primary school attendance.

While conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance and development efforts all go hand in hand, we must also address the root causes of conflicts, not merely their symptoms. In other words, the effective management of conflicts must include efforts to promote sustainable development, eradicate poverty, ease the unbearable debt burden of the poor countries and encourage and follow-up measures for democratic and economic reform.

In the area of democratic reforms, the cooperation provided by the United Nations is a useful support to the efforts made in this area by African States, be it in the area of elections, good governance or respect for human rights. The electoral assistance provided by the United Nations through its Department of Political Affairs is part of the efforts undertaken by African countries themselves in setting up stable and representative Governments — an essential factor for the prevention of conflicts.

From an economic point of view, there is no need to point out that the quest for adequate and lasting solutions to the problems of growth and economic development are concerns of African States. In this respect, the OAU and African countries have, in recent years, endeavoured to begin drastic economic reforms and programmes on a continental scale: the Lagos Plan of Action is still relevant 19 years later, as well as the African Economic Community — launched in 1991; the Cairo Programme of Action of 1995 — devoted to enhancing economic and social development in Africa; and finally the African Union — a project that was launched at the special summit in Surt in September 1999 and was adopted at the last OAU Summit in Lomé. The expertise of the Economic Commission for Africa of the United Nations is particularly beneficial for the Secretary-General of the OAU in his efforts to draw up various strategies for integration within the continent.

The implementation of these different integration measures can certainly be enhanced through cooperation among African States, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund — the latter two providing the assistance to the African States that would allow them to strengthen their capacity for macroeconomic management.

Likewise, cooperation among the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the OAU and African States would allow Africa to implement the programmes mentioned above insofar as they would help African countries in multilateral trade negotiations and would allow them to further benefit from advantages offered by globalization and to be able to deal with the risks it brings.

The objectives pursued by the United Nations through its deep and multi-faceted partnership with the OAU and African countries include the effort to eradicate poverty in Africa. If, in spite of commitments made and efforts undertaken, the awaited results are late in coming, it is because of the diversity and scope of the problems.

As we are aware, the financial situation of the continent is characterized by an enormous external debt, stagnant national savings, as well as declining official development assistance and weak private capital flows.

During the review of agenda item 50, entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa," many delegations highlighted the impact of these different factors on prospects for development in Africa.

Of course the critical situation of financing for development in Africa will not improve overnight without a new political will and a renewed commitment on the part of the international community. In this regard, the United Nations plays a leading role in mobilizing the adequate resources that Africa requires. It must also play a more active role in the crusade carried out by African countries to cancel their external debt.

Likewise, since information and communication technologies can help to promote economic and social development and to alleviate poverty, the United Nations must firmly support African States in this area as well.

The high-level debate organized by the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session of the year 2000 on the theme of "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy" made it possible to take stock of the importance of this matter vis-à-vis African countries and of the digital divide that separates Africa from the other regions of the world.

It is therefore desirable that initiatives designed to assist Africa, such as the first African Development Forum — organized in Addis Ababa in October 1999 under the aegis of the Economic Commission for Africa — should be often repeated. This Forum made it possible for the participants to adopt a certain number of programmes, including NGO-NET — an action group that aims to include civil society in promoting information and communication technologies in the service of development in Africa.

Health is also a very important area of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. In this regard, actions carried out by the United Nations system to control HIV/AIDS on the one hand and to fight malaria on the other are to be welcomed.

Last week, the General Assembly adopted without a vote — certainly in a spirit of solidarity with the people of Africa — resolution 55/13, in which it

> "decides to convene, as a matter of urgency, a special session of the General Assembly, from 25 to 27 June 2001, to review and address the problem of HIV/AIDS in all its aspects." (*resolution 55/13, para. 1*)

Africa expects a great deal from this meeting, in the preparation of which the Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS should play a leading role. In this regard, it warrants the support and the constant encouragement of the international community.

We must also welcome the efforts made by the World Health Organization in the area of protection and improvement of health for all, in particular the poorest and the most vulnerable. The campaigns, "Roll Back Malaria" in Africa, the programme to reduce maternal mortality through better access to appropriate care in developing countries and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization are all telling examples of these efforts that greatly benefit Africa.

To conclude, I would like to point out that despite the continuing enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, many challenges remain. In order to overcome these challenges, we need time, resources and comprehensive initiatives that are appropriate and bold on the part of the OAU and the United Nations, its funds, programmes and specialized agencies, as well as the international community as a whole.

Africa, as was mentioned on 12 September 2000 by the current Chairman of the OAU, must face all kinds of difficulties, but it remains a region that is potentially wealthy and as a result must be assisted and supported in order to fulfil its immense potential. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU will help to achieve this objective.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia – and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey align themselves with this statement.

First of all the European Union would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report he submitted to the Assembly under this agenda item. Although much remains to be done, the report shows the extent to which the two organizations have been able to develop close ties in order to work together in various fields.

The European Union especially welcomes the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to enhance their mutual capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa. While it feels it vital to continue holding regular meetings between the two Secretaries-General and their senior advisers, the European Union nevertheless feels that the current Chairman and members of the OAU General Secretariat could appear more often before the Security Council to provide information on their management of various African crises.

Today's debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU is taking place at what is still a critical time for the African continent. On the one hand, we can see some signs of political and socio-economic progress. On the other hand, more than a third of African countries are, or have recently been, involved in armed conflict. The European Union is deeply concerned over the increase in the number of armed conflicts, the constant influx of arms and military equipment and the growing role of uncontrolled rebel groups in armed conflicts.

While recalling that, under the Charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the European Union welcomes the commitment by African countries and regional organizations to play a leading role in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The European Union commends the efforts by African leaders and States, as well as by regional and subregional organizations, and in particular the Organization of African Unity, to resolve conflicts by peaceful means.

As we said last year, the European Union has a consultative mechanism with the OAU, which we wish to develop further. In particular, we are willing to strengthen dialogue with the OAU and subregional organizations on concrete ways of backing their efforts, inter alia, in preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, heightening awareness of the importance of respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and promoting the rule of law and a pluralist society. The European Union has adopted a common position on human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance in Africa. It gives high priority to a positive and constructive approach, with a view to supporting efforts by the OAU, subregional groups and African countries to promote respect for human rights and good governance.

In this context, the European Union welcomes the success of the Africa-Europe Summit which was held in Cairo this year under the aegis of the European Union and the OAU. In many respects, the Cairo Declaration and the Cairo Plan of Action serve as reference documents and instruments for cooperation on security, social welfare and health, particularly in respect of the fight against HIV/AIDS. The commitments made by the African countries themselves concerning the social sector, the environment, good governance and human rights must be actively supported by the international community.

Before going into detail about various subregional situations, I would like to pinpoint three areas in which we feel all the bodies concerned, particularly the United Nations and the OAU, should cooperate more closely.

The first is the fight against trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The initiative taken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to impose a moratorium on the import and manufacture of small arms should be actively supported and most certainly extended to other regions of Africa.

Secondly, with regard to the establishment of an integrated and coordinated mechanism to counter trafficking in raw materials and arms, the European Union welcomes the Security Council's efforts to improve its understanding of the economic origins and commercial aspects of certain African conflicts. It

notes with satisfaction the establishment for Angola of a mechanism to monitor sanctions against UNITA, the setting up of a panel to investigate the illegal exploitation of resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and the creation of a panel to investigate illegal trade in diamonds and arms in Sierra Leone. It is also possible to envisage having a single expert body, under the aegis of the United Nations Secretary-General, to centralize all information and draw vital comparisons between the various situations. Trafficking, by definition, knows no frontiers, and criminal interests are often the same from one crisis to another. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in this field will be decisive.

Thirdly, and lastly, there should be a much more systematic awareness campaign against the use of child soldiers in all countries in conflict. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are doing excellent groundwork, which should be more actively supported by all the political bodies involved.

The European Union attaches great importance to its regular dialogue on crisis management with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and with African regional and subregional organizations.

With regard to Sierra Leone and the situation in the three countries of the Mano River Union, the European Union is in close contact with ECOWAS. A preliminary ministerial meeting between the European Union and the West African regional organization was held in Abuja on 15 October 2000. The European Union also supports the efforts of the United Nations and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to restore peace to the country, and calls on the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to engage in the process of demobilization, disarmament and rehabilitation provided for under the Lomé agreements. The European Union also calls on all the States in the region to scrupulously respect the embargo on arms for non-governmental forces and the embargo on non-certified diamonds imposed by Security Council resolutions 1132 (1997) and 1306 (2000).

With regard to the Horn of Africa, the European Union reiterates its full support for the diplomatic efforts by the United Nations and the OAU to resolve the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It welcomes the recent resumption of talks in Algiers with Ethiopia and Eritrea, and considers that the creation of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea should constitute a crucial factor in stabilizing the situation. The European Union calls on the parties to implement Security Council resolution 1320 (2000). It also commends the extremely positive results of the process conducted by President Guelleh of Djibouti regarding Somalia. The success of the Arta conference and the creation of new Somali institutions have won the unequivocal and firm support of the international community. The European Union calls all on all sides that have not yet done so to participate in this process.

The European Union reaffirms its support for United Nations and OAU efforts to restore peace to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. It urges the parties to implement the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions. Together with regional players and organizations, particularly the Southern African Development Community, the OAU played an important part in bringing the parties to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the negotiating table in 1999 and in the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. The OAU also made a tangible contribution to implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement by sending observers, creating the Joint Military Commission and appointing the facilitator of the inter-Congolese national dialogue. The European Union supports OAU efforts and provides assistance for funding the Joint Military Commission and facilitating the national dialogue.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains very troubling. The Union is concerned about the dangers of a general resumption of hostilities, which could jeopardize the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). It is essential that the OAU pursue its endeavours to achieve a settlement. In this connection, we note that the States parties to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at the recent Maputo summit, asked the OAU to assist in appointing the new Chairman of the Joint Military Commission. We also think the OAU can play an important role in helping overcome the deadlock stalling the inter-Congolese dialogue.

Sustainable development in Africa is a priority for the European Union. The European Union's commitment to Africa is based on shared interests, values and objectives. We wish to help Africa achieve

peace and stability in order to improve the quality of life of its people. A political climate conducive to respect for human rights and good governance and an active civil society are essential for sustainable development. In this respect, development cooperation must play an important role.

The European Union remains determined to fight poverty and meet the target of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. The European Union remains the major source of development aid for Africa. It accounts for more than two thirds — I repeat, more than two thirds — of total official development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa. Development assistance plays a key role in underpinning the policies pursued by the African countries. This is particularly the case in the least developed countries, three quarters of which are in Africa. Donors and African countries share responsibility for ensuring that development assistance is used effectively.

With particular regard to the question of debt, I would like to stress that the European Union considers the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative an essential ingredient for fighting poverty and achieving sustainable development objectives. So far the European Union has contributed 68 per cent of the total payments made to the Trust Fund to finance the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. It calls on eligible countries to honour their international political commitments and to take the necessary political and economic measures in order to begin this process, and to ensure that upon implementation of the HIPC Debt Initiative, the resources mobilized are allocated to social sectors such as education and health and that they promote the rule of law, good governance, the participation of civil society and human development.

In conclusion, I wish to highlight the European Union's willingness to work with all our African friends in drawing up a draft resolution, much more focused than those of years past, that could truly place emphasis on those issues that are a priority for renewed cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by associating myself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Togo, the country currently presiding over the Organization of African Unity (OAU). I also wish to congratulate the Secretary-General on the quality and relevance of his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The review of this item is of particular importance for Africans because, since 1960, the year of African countries' independence, our continent has been a major concern of the international community and thus holds a special place on the United Nations agenda.

This interest given to Africa stems certainly from the continent's geopolitical position, but also, and above all, from the diversity and complexity of the political, economic and social problems that African States face.

Thus, you will understand, Mr. President, the importance that African countries, joined together in the framework of our pan-African organization, attach to the consolidation, deepening and expansion of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

This multifaceted cooperation is a model that today goes beyond the narrow scope of institutional relations between two organizations and embraces the positive synergy of the activities and contributions of other actors on the international scene.

This cooperation strives to become multidimensional in order to better tackle all African aspirations to peace, stability, development, the promotion of the rule of law, the promotion of human rights and a suitable response to the irresistible march of globalization, which is shaping contemporary international relations in a new way.

In his report, the Secretary-General gives an exhaustive overview of the actions undertaken during the past year, with regard to both the actions of the Secretariat itself and those of the various programmes and bodies of the two organizations in the framework of their cooperation. In this regard, I would like to welcome and underscore in particular the decisive enthusiasm shown by both Secretaries-General in their cooperation through their regular meetings outside of OAU summits and General Assembly sessions, as well as through their regular meetings regarding crises affecting Africa in order to better coordinate their actions in the areas of policy and security.

Despite the bold reforms carried out to improve the macroeconomic situation and to democratize political systems, the African continent is still shaken by many areas of tension. For example, there are the crises in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Angola and, Somalia and the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In those various situations cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the area of conflict prevention and peacekeeping has been decisive in that it has made it possible to set up technical arrangements to facilitate the implementation of ceasefire agreements and to deploy joint civilian and military missions, thereby strengthening African capacities for conflict prevention and management.

We should also welcome the wholehearted support the United Nations provides the OAU within the framework of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. In particular, we appreciate the United Nations interest in the OAU Peace Fund, whose resources, acquired thanks to the generosity of donor countries, have helped to improve the capacity for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Africa.

With regard to following up major African crises, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in close cooperation with the OAU Secretary-General, has appointed personal representatives or envoys to Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Angola and the Central African Republic.

These various achievements are clearly encouraging, and should be attributed to the cooperation between the two organizations and the leadership of the two Secretaries-General. But this progress, as positive as it is, has not served to stem the dissatisfaction felt by Africa towards an international community that is often too reluctant to manage serious crises that break out in Africa. The relative failure of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and, especially, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the deployment of a United Nations mission has been indefinitely put off, are perfect illustrations of how the United Nations often fails in its duty to assist Africa in the way Africans expect of the Organization and the international community.

It is in that context that Senegal congratulates the members of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. Through the report known as the Brahimi report, the Panel's relevant recommendations offer the United Nations new possibilities to reduce tensions and manage conflicts wisely in order to allow countries ravaged by war to turn their efforts towards development. This is how Senegal sees the import of the Brahimi report and its relevant recommendations.

Indeed, without peace, security and stability, development becomes empty rhetoric. But without development, peace can only be precarious. This approach, which is both didactic and dialectic, must henceforth become the foundation of a new United Nations agenda for the economic and social development of Africa. This approach is starting to be implemented jointly by African countries and the operational agencies of the United Nations system, following the example of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and, above all, the United Nations International Development Organization, which, in close cooperation with African countries, has launched a project called Alliance for Africa's Industrialization.

Other agencies of the United Nations, such as the World Health Organization and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, are also applying themselves to the fight against the AIDS pandemic, which is a true scourge in Africa. We must also mention the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on behalf of the 7 million refugees and displaced persons on the continent through its programmes to assist such people and to help them return to their countries of origin.

My delegation is convinced that the United Nations can do more, and wants to do better, for Africa. That was the wish expressed by the participants in the Millennium Summit in the final Declaration, which devoted an entire section to the specific needs of Africa, which must be harmoniously integrated into the world economy. We hope that this commitment of the international community will not be in vain, and that it will soon lead to concrete action, given that Africa is ready to undertake its share of responsibility.

That responsibility is in evidence in the historic decision taken by OAU heads of State and Government at Lomé last July to set up the African Economic Union

to forge their common destiny. Through that extremely significant political act, Africa is today more than ever ready to mobilize all its resources to tackle the many challenges of the twenty-first century through greater political, economic and social integration.

It goes without saying that the fulfilment of such an ambition for Africa requires time, energy and true political will on the part of Africans. It also requires closer and more dynamic cooperation and a comprehensive, concrete response from this Organization, from the entire United Nations system and from the international community at large. My delegation therefore earnestly appeals to States Members of the United Nations to support the draft resolution to be submitted on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Darwish (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to convey our thanks to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report (A/55/498) before the Assembly on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The report is of particular importance at a time when increasing responsibilities are being entrusted to the OAU and when it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations in the diplomatic, political, military, economic, social, development and other spheres. Such cooperation is to the benefit of Africa and helps enhance the structural and institutional capacities of the OAU — which, in Egypt's view, constitutes the ultimate goal.

I wish therefore to hail the ongoing efforts of the secretariats of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity to strengthen the mechanisms for cooperation and consultation between the two organizations, which include at least twice-yearly meetings between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the OAU: once during the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, and once during the General Assembly session at New York.

The report of the Secretary-General indicates that in its programme of cooperation with the United Nations for 2000-2002, the OAU secretariat has highlighted a number of priority issues in which current programmes need to be enhanced in order to reach the desired goals. These include: debt relief, debt cancellation and increasing resource flows; implementation of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community — the Abuja Treaty; health issues such as combating HIV/AIDS and malaria; issues of democracy such as good governance and respect for human rights; and enhancing the capacity of the Organization of African Unity to respond rapidly to crises and to engage in conflict management.

There is no doubt that Africa faces formidable challenges on all those issues and that the burden of armed conflicts under way in various parts of the continent is growing heavier. The delegation of Egypt looks to the world Organization to formulate specific joint programmes to attain the ambitious goals that have been identified with respect to each of those issues. It is our hope that all organs and agencies of the United Nations system will participate in those programmes and endeavours until they achieve their desired goals.

We hope that coming years will see a strengthening of cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations in all those priority fields. We hope too that they will see further efforts to improve the institutional capacity of the Organization of African Unity so that it can rely on its own resources in meeting the challenges facing the continent, specifically the settlement and management of armed conflicts. In that context, we call on the United Nations to lend particular support to the activities of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, by developing its capacities in the spheres of early warning, logistical support and technical assistance, training of civilian and military personnel, and encouraging donor countries to contribute generously to the various trust funds set up by the United Nations and by the Organization of African Unity towards that noble objective.

As we see from the report of the Secretary-General, over the past year the Organization of African Unity has made commendable efforts in taking the initiative in settling armed conflicts in Africa. Africa's political will has been reflected in positions taken on a number of issues: in West Africa, the Sierra Leone conflict; in Central Africa, the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi; and in the Horn of Africa, the settlement of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the establishment of Somalia's first national Government since 1991.

We welcome efforts to enhance the capacity of the Organization of African Unity to maintain peace

and security in Africa, especially through support for the OAU Centre for Conflict Management, located in Addis Ababa. At the same time, we stress that Africa's assumption of a greater role in this sphere must not be at the expense of the role played by the United Nations. Nor should it marginalize the United Nations, which is the organization with sole responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the relationship between the OAU and the United Nations, the latter should not rely on the former; the OAU should rely on the United Nations to settle wars and disputes on the continent. In our view, the United Nations response to crises in Africa indicates that the Organization has actually begun to shoulder its responsibility after a period of inaction during which we saw the international community grow lax in its reaction to international crises in Africa. The United Nations took the initiative in settling the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and set up the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea to maintain the peace following the 18 June 2000 signing at Algiers of an Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. And rather than withdrawing from Sierra Leone when crisis erupted in that friendly country, the United Nations bolstered its military presence and intensified its efforts to put an end to the horrible war there; it has moreover begun to deal with the regional ramifications of the Sierra Leone crisis.

It is our hope that those examples reflect a healthy, positive approach. Here, we express our hope that the United Nations will persist in its efforts and show the world that it is a universal international organization that addresses African crises on an equal footing with other crises, such as those of Kosovo and East Timor.

I wish in conclusion to reaffirm our confidence in and appreciation for the Secretary-General's noble efforts to intensify the strong relations between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in all spheres. Here, we reiterate the readiness of Egypt, as an active member of both organizations, to participate fully in activities to help attain the priority goals that have been identified for enhancing our continent-wide organization and for enabling it to play its rightful role in the international community.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I should like to say that my delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Togo on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Just one week ago, the General Assembly considered the question of peace and development in Africa on the basis of the conclusions of the Working Group set up to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report (A/52/871) of the Secretary-General of April 1998. Today, Africa is once again on the agenda of this Assembly, from the perspective of cooperation between the continent-wide Organization of African Unity and the United Nations. In this connection, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed and comprehensive report on this question.

Algeria held the chairmanship of the OAU last year, and I should like to share with the Assembly what we learned from that experience and offer a few suggestions that we believe might help to improve the substance of our cooperation and its effectiveness in attaining the goals that have been set.

Today, cooperation between the two organizations has moved beyond a strictly institutional framework; it is now part of a new context characterized by a beneficial international awareness of the many challenges facing the African continent. Indeed, Africa is still affected by numerous areas of conflict, poverty that affects more than one in three people, a heavy debt burden that jeopardizes any effort to undertake economic development and, above all else, the terrible tragedy of the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the continent.

It should be noted, however, that this new awareness on the part of the international community, and its commitment to help Africa face the many threats and dangers facing the continent, is slow in developing and in manifesting itself in a consistent manner in real deeds. It is therefore essential for the commitments made by the international community finally to be translated into effective action.

For its part, Africa must continue to shoulder its responsibility — as, indeed, it has never ceased to do in the past — in the main areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping throughout the continent, the establishment of democratic institutions within countries and the creation of conditions propitious to economic recovery and development, without which economic and social progress cannot take place.

During its chairmanship of the OAU last year, Algeria spared no effort to coordinate African action at the continent-wide level, consolidate the structures and methods used by the OAU and provide it with the means and resources that it needed. In that context, Algeria attached great importance to political cooperation and coordination between the OAU and the United Nations, whose competence, experience and expertise give it a major advantage.

The United Nations was therefore involved in all OAU efforts to resolve various African conflicts. Algeria would like to pay particular tribute to the United Nations Secretary-General, the Government of the United States and the European Union for their constant support for our efforts to mediate the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea; we regularly kept the Secretary-General and the Security Council informed about developments in the peace process.

My country's efforts led to the conclusion, on 18 June 2000 in Algiers, of a ceasefire agreement that opened up the road for an equitable and lasting political settlement to the fratricidal conflict. The resumption of direct discussions between the two countries last October will speed up the settlement of outstanding issues. In order to consolidate the current peace process, it is important to implement the provisions of Security Council resolution 1320 (2000) by quickly deploying the 4,200 troops as part of the broadened mandate of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The contribution of the universal organization, that is the United Nations, working alongside the OAU and other regional African organizations, to resolving other conflicts in Africa has also been demonstrated in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia. A real partnership is now under way between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations in Sierra Leone through the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). The standing mechanism for consultation and cooperation set up in this regard has made it possible to better control the situation in that country. Likewise, last Friday the Security Council expressed its support for a system of strategic cooperation involving various components of the Organization, as well as troop-contributing countries and the members of the Economic Community of West African States, and this approach will assist in speeding up the return to peace in Sierra Leone.

We are still worried, however, by the reappearance of the spectre of indifference on the part of the developed countries with regard to peace missions in Africa. The difficulties encountered by the United Nations in finding sufficient troops for UNAMSIL — to take just one example — following authorization by the Security Council for the deployment of more than 20,000, are a real cause for concern.

The momentum for peace that emerged recently in Somalia, following the initiative of Djibouti, must be given greater support so that thanks to the re-establishment of a national authority, the Somali people can finally regain peace and stability and begin to rebuild their country, devastated by more than a decade of civil war.

Another main aspect of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU relates to economic and social development. The majority of African States are engaged in economic recovery processes, which must be supported by the United Nations and the international community. Progress has been made in some countries, but the overall situation of African economies is still of overwhelming concern, and the continent continues to face many problems, including debt, the drying up of resources and persistent poverty.

Efforts are being made at the national level, yet, paradoxically, official development assistance is still decreasing, and the commitment made by rich countries to commit 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product is far from being fulfilled. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General noted in his report on the causes of conflict in Africa, even when aid is forthcoming, 70 per cent of it is redirected back to the rich countries through the hiring of consultants and other technical advisers.

The main economic challenge facing Africa today is, without doubt, the external debt, which has been estimated at more than $350 billion. This is a heavy burden and represents an unprecedented haemorrhage of its resources. At the extraordinary OAU summit held in Surt in 1999, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and South African President Thabo Mbeki were called on by their peers to defend the request to the developed countries and multilateral institutions to cancel African debt. While it is true that progress has been made, inasmuch as creditor countries are more aware of the vital importance to Africa of this matter, it

is also true that the timid initiatives taken in the past few months to ease the debt burden of some African countries, among them the least developed countries, fall far short of what had been hoped for.

Likewise, there has been a constant erosion in the resources of the United Nations Development Programme and other specialized agencies in the United Nations system, which has forced these bodies to make difficult choices. This situation must be resolved in order to enable them to play their role in supporting efforts at recovery in Africa.

Humanitarian work is another equally important area in the framework of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. The African continent today is host to more than half of the approximately 20 million refugees throughout the world, yet Africa does not receive the attention it should given its truly tragic situation, nor does it get a fair share of the resources allocated in the context of humanitarian assistance. My delegation would like the situation to be remedied, through, inter alia, the implementation of the plan of action for African refugees that emanated from the joint OAU-United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) meeting of March 2000.

As we have seen, there are many multidimensional areas for cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. They deal, inter alia, with questions as varied as the peaceful settlement of disputes, institutional assistance, support for economic programmes, assistance to refugees and the combat against epidemics.

Experience has shown the need for, and the usefulness of, such cooperation, which, despite our common will to promote it, continues to feel the effects of the scarcity of resources. Only with assistance from the United Nations will it be able to implement its overall mission and, in respect to the issues we are dealing with today, to bring to a successful conclusion the many projects in which it is involved in the context of cooperation with the OAU.

In this respect, Africa has genuine hopes for the forthcoming special conferences of the United Nations on the AIDS pandemic and on financing for development. We expect from these conferences and from our partners specific commitments and innovative proposals that will lead to concrete actions to help Africa.

In conclusion, let me say that at the Millennium Summit, world leaders, meeting on a unique and historic occasion, made solemn commitments to support peace and development in the African continent in particular. We hope that the Declaration adopted on that occasion will herald a new era in our collective effort to take up the many challenges and counter the many threats facing peace and development in Africa. The United Nations, whose central mission was recognized in the Millennium Declaration, must play a paramount role in this respect.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): As I stressed at last year's meeting, the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly in addressing the issues of conflict prevention and economic development, can never be overstated. Japan therefore supports the efforts to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as outlined in the Secretary-General's report.

The OAU has long been engaged in activities to advance the cause of peace and prosperity in Africa. Its efforts were instrumental in facilitating the peace agreements on the conflicts in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and, most recently, between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The cessation of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea is indeed encouraging, and I wish to commend the OAU for its diligent efforts to date. However, further efforts by all concerned — including the United Nations Mission for Ethiopia and Eritrea, led by our former colleague, Ambassador Legwaila — are required in order to attain durable peace between the two countries.

The OAU's comprehensive framework of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa is important testimony to the determination on the part of African countries to advance the cause of peace on the continent. Yet it is obvious that the OAU needs greater cooperation and support from the international community. United Nations cooperation with the OAU is particularly essential in order to ensure that the comprehensive framework functions effectively. The support of other partners in the developed world is also indispensable.

Japan, for its part, is prepared to assist the OAU in its efforts for conflict prevention, management and resolution. It has already extended a number of

financial contributions to the OAU Peace Fund, which have been utilized for various conflict prevention and democratization activities. Most recently, Japan assisted the OAU peacekeeping mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, particularly in establishing the OAU liaison offices in Addis Ababa and Asmara. We remain committed to supporting the OAU's efforts in pursuit of peace.

There is another dimension in which Japan facilitates cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. The so-called Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process, which Japan has been promoting since 1993, is contributing greatly to cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The TICAD process focuses on sustainable development in Africa as well as on conflict prevention. It also supports the OAU's Comprehensive Framework. Moreover, the participation of several Asian countries in the TICAD process is broadening the base of support for African development and promoting cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations system.

I want to remind the Assembly in this context that Foreign Minister Yohei Kono announced in his statement to the General Assembly this September that Japan had decided to hold a ministerial meeting on African development in fiscal year 2001, with a view to making preparations for the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III). We hope that the proposed ministerial meeting will add further political momentum to the TICAD process and help strengthen cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations system.

As the Millennium Declaration rightly underlined, Africa will require special attention in the coming years in many different contexts, including efforts to eradicate poverty and debt, prevent conflict and address the issue of small arms, and combat AIDS and other diseases. Against this backdrop, the responsibility of the OAU is greater than ever, as is the need for the international community, and the United Nations in particular, to extend support and cooperation to this valuable African organization.

Japan, for its part, is prepared to do its best in order to support the OAU and African countries in their struggle with the difficult problems they face.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) *(spoke in Arabic)*: Allow me at the outset to express to the Secretary-General, on behalf of the Tunisian delegation, our gratitude and appreciation for his valuable report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and for his efforts to promote this cooperation.

Ever since its inception, the OAU has reflected the aspirations of African peoples and countries for a united continent. It has played a crucial role in asserting the legitimate political aspirations of the continent and in promoting rapprochement, solidarity and cooperation among African peoples and countries. It has served as an ideal collective African framework for action.

Tunisia attaches particular importance to cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU and to means for enhancing this cooperation. We welcome the priority status that Africa has acquired on the United Nations agenda, especially as a result of the many programmes and initiatives related to this continent that the United Nations and its specialized agencies have established and of the ongoing coordination between the two organizations on issues relating to the continent, especially in the fields of international peace and security and economic and social development.

The report of the Secretary-General highlights many of the areas and levels of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. While we welcome all the achievements that have been made, we call for a follow-up and for a continuation of these efforts in order to promote cooperation and coordination, since Africa and its regional organization face many challenges that require greater commitment on the part of the international community, especially by the United Nations.

My delegation welcomes the practice of regular consultations that both Secretaries-General have consistently followed. We also welcome the discussions held by high officials from the two organizations in certain areas. These will strengthen the cooperative ties between the organizations.

The African continent has been working in the context of the OAU and other subregional organizations, first, by relying on its own resources in order to address its own problems, and, secondly, by

relying on the solidarity and support of the international community.

In recent years the African continent has witnessed many acute struggles that threatened peace and security and led to difficult humanitarian situations, with tragic economic and social dimensions. The Security Council, as the highest authority in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security, has attached great importance to these struggles. The numerous meetings that the Council has devoted to addressing these issues this year have provided many opportunities for assessing and organizing cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the field of peace and security in Africa and the means to support them.

Africa has made many efforts to contribute to the settlement of conflicts in a way that guarantees peace and security, supports stability and provides for development. However, despite the attempts at conciliation and the initiatives undertaken by many African leaders, in coordination with the United Nations and the OAU, many of the complex conflicts have yet to be fully resolved.

Africa has given priority to the issue of dispute settlement and to conflict prevention, management and resolution. The mechanism created by the OAU for this purpose has played a positive role in this field, despite limited resources. This mechanism reflects the resolve of African States to rely on their own resources to solve the problems of the continent. At the same time, these States remain keenly interested in coordinating their efforts with the United Nations.

In this context we would like to reaffirm Africa's determination to shoulder its responsibilities. However, this determination should not relieve the international community and the United Nations of their responsibilities.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the field of peace and security has resulted in many achievements in past years. These efforts should be enhanced. We call upon the United Nations and its Member States to increase their support for the OAU in order to strengthen its institutional capacities.

In recent years Africa has made many efforts in the field of development, enhancing the principles of dialogue, democracy and human rights, and supporting regional cooperation and economic integration by implementing the Abuja Agreement, which created the African Economic Community. We hope our partners will continue to provide their support for this objective.

In this regard, we look forward to a prompt solution to the debt problem and to more support for the efforts to eradicate poverty and disease, open international markets to African products and attract greater direct foreign investment. We would like to express our appreciation for the numerous initiatives to enhance sustainable development in Africa undertaken by the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions. We call for greater coordination for the success of these initiatives. My delegation would like to praise the positive initiatives undertaken by many of our African partners in order to develop and increase cooperation and coordination.

As the United Nations and the OAU prepare to move to the next phase of their cooperation and coordination, we hope that, after a review of past achievements, cooperation will be enhanced and coordination will be based on various political, economic and social elements so as to serve international peace, security, stability and development in Africa, enhance the role of the United Nations and advance its principles and purposes.

Mr. Shinkaiye (Nigeria): Nigeria wishes at the outset to express its full support for the statement made by the representative of Togo on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We also thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report on cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. We request that all the programmes identified in the report be implemented.

My delegation attaches great importance to this agenda item for many reasons, which we need not recount here. Suffice it to say that cooperation between the United Nations, the world's only truly universal organization, and the OAU, the only continental organization that binds the variegated regions and peoples of Africa together, has not only symbolic, but also substantive significance for us in Africa.

It is commonly acknowledged — and we in Africa are the first to admit this — that our continent constitutes the weakest segment of the chain that links the global family of nations and peoples. The myriad problems that currently afflict the continent are very well known and have, in fact, been the subject of intense debate and discussion at this and other sessions.

Only last week, this Assembly devoted time to the discussion of how to tackle the continent's many conflicts and promote sustainable development.

Irrespective of the nature, sources or causes of the problems and challenges facing Africa, one fact is incontrovertible. Many of these problems, by their very nature, cannot be resolved successfully by African countries acting alone or even acting together. They have to be resolved in cooperation with the continent's development partners and the wider international community. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity should therefore, among other objectives, be aimed at realizing this goal. Besides, this cooperation is a vivid demonstration of the principles of international solidarity and testimony to Africa's shared humanity with the rest of the global community.

Over the years, cooperation between the two organizations, begun in 1965 and based primarily on the principle of mutual respect, has grown wider and deeper to encompass very many issues and concerns not even contemplated at the beginning. It has also grown to include not only cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations alone, but also between the OAU and the United Nations specialized agencies. The Nigerian delegation welcomes this development.

Nevertheless, we urge that we do not rest on our oars, as the African situation calls for not only an intensification of this cooperation, but, more important, a rigorous review of its content and scope. At no time has this cooperation been more urgently needed than now, given the worsening situation of the African continent, which is increasingly being further marginalized. It is for this reason that we welcome the activities of the United Nations liaison office with the OAU, which has led to enhanced cooperation, coordination and exchange of information with the OAU in a number of areas.

It is the view of the Nigerian delegation that a number of priority areas have to be identified if the cooperative activities between the United Nations and the OAU are to be well focused and well targeted. Here, we have in mind such areas as capacity-building in all its ramifications, but especially in the areas of conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building, including the question of refugees and displaced persons. Other areas should include the promotion of good governance, transparency and accountability; poverty eradication; control and management of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and major infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis; as well as issues pertaining to economic growth and development, especially the external debt crisis which the continent currently faces. This list of issues is, of course, not exhaustive, but only indicative.

Africa's capacity for dealing with these issues has to be enhanced if we are committed to arresting the continent's downward slide. The emergence of a few pockets of progress and hope on the continent, while welcomed, is nowhere near a critical mass that can give the process of rejuvenation a momentum of its own to become sustainable.

In further fine-tuning of the existing cooperation between the two organizations, the Nigerian delegation would like to see greater assistance given by the United Nations to the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, given the ravages caused by the many conflicts that have put Africa's efforts to reverse its underdevelopment at enormous risk. In this connection, we draw attention to the resolutions and decisions taken by African leaders at the Thirty-sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, which met in Lomé, Togo, from 10 to 12 July 2000, and especially the Solemn Declaration on the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa. We hope that the expected assistance from the international community, including the United Nations, will be forthcoming to enable full implementation of that Declaration.

Allow me to refer to a few specific areas in which cooperation between the two organizations has led to very positive developments. I have in mind the collaborative efforts between the United Nations and the OAU in conflict management and resolution. This has not only resulted in a peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, but promises to provide a durable solution to this sad conflict between two brother nations. Nigeria applauds the efforts deployed by both organizations which have made this possible, and we urge that the process be pursued to its logical conclusion.

The Ethiopia-Eritrea peace process is a clear indication of what benefits the world can derive when our global Organization works closely with regional or continental organizations, such as the OAU, in dealing

with a serious crisis. Nigeria therefore fully supports the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in dealing with other conflicts, such as those in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Western Sahara.

Nigeria, however, urges the United Nations to also involve the OAU more closely in its peace efforts in Sierra Leone. We recall that the OAU, like the United Nations, fully participated in the process leading to the Lomé Peace Agreement, and both organizations are guarantors of the Agreement. We admit that the OAU itself was somewhat laid back after the agreement was signed and does not have the resources to play a more visible role. Nevertheless, we believe that the OAU can help, and the United Nations should work closely with the OAU Secretary General's Special Envoy on Sierra Leone, Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo of South Africa.

Finally, on the subject of conflicts in Africa, Nigeria appeals to the United Nations to take a new look at the situation in Somalia, that unfortunate country that has been ravaged by conflict for so long. As the Central Organ of the OAU Conflict Management Mechanism recently urged, every support should be given to the recently elected Somali President and the Transitional National Assembly in order to ensure that national unity and central Government are restored in the country. The process clearly shows that the Somali people want peace, and the world should not abandon them. Due tribute should be paid to the President of Djibouti for his valiant effort in furtherance of this noble objective. He has helped to give hope to the people of Somalia and deserves our commendation.

Nigeria welcomes the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in response to the General Assembly's request that the United Nations and its specialized agencies — notably the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and others — should take appropriate steps to complement, in a coordinated manner, the fight against HIV/AIDS. In this regard, we support the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, which is organizing in December this year its second annual African Development Forum, the theme this year being "AIDS: The Greatest Leadership Challenge." The OAU is involved in the programme. We appeal to the United Nations to reciprocate by joining hands with the OAU, which will organize in Abuja, Nigeria, some time next year, an African summit on HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. It is our hope that, with such collaborative efforts, Africa will be in a position to halt the HIV/AIDS virus, which is currently ravaging the continent.

The Nigerian delegation would like to conclude by commending the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to keep African issues on the front burner of the United Nations agenda, despite the critical resource constraints that our Organization continues to face. The Governments and peoples of Africa are truly indebted to him and to all the Governments that have demonstrated faith in Africa's capacity to overcome its current multifaceted challenges. Although the primary responsibility for meeting these challenges lies with the continent and its leaders, they can be truly addressed only in concert with Africa's development partners and the wider international community.

Our world will certainly be a better place when Africa takes its rightful place as a respected member of the global family. We look forward to that day, and it is our belief that this is a realizable objective. The United Nations and its specialized agencies have a responsibility and indeed a duty to support Africa's political, social and economic recovery, as was rightly agreed by world leaders in the Millennium Declaration which they recently adopted. Let us all resolve to fully implement that Declaration.

Mr. Hønningstad (Norway): Allow me first to welcome this opportunity again to discuss "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity". The mere fact that much of Africa is still ravaged by serious armed conflicts, droughts and continued underdevelopment underlines the great importance of strong and practical cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Norway believes that such cooperation is beneficial to both organizations and will further their high ambitions to assist conflict prevention and resolution and the economic and social development of the African nations.

Norway has called for strengthened coordination and increased cooperation between the two organizations, and is therefore encouraged by the strong commitment of the Secretary-General to enhancing such cooperation. The increased practical

implementation of cooperation arrangements over the last few years constitutes a strong platform for an even closer relationship. Indeed, Norway will push for such enhanced cooperation and coordination when we take our seat on the Security Council. The increasing participation of the OAU in the United Nations, its organs and specialized agencies makes a very valuable contribution towards this aim.

Much has happened since the decision by the OAU in 1993 to relinquish its non-intervention policy and to establish the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The OAU is now actively engaged in trying to solve all ongoing conflicts on the continent. Although much remains to be done to have a fully operational OAU Mechanism, assistance from the United Nations and bilateral partners of the OAU has strengthened its capacity. However, further efforts by the United Nations to assist the OAU in enhancing this capacity and facilitating closer cooperation is called for. Norway will continue to support the Mechanism, and calls for United Nations technical assistance and for staff exchange programmes to be put in place.

The effects of the many ongoing conflicts in Africa only exacerbate poverty and underdevelopment, the HIV/Aids pandemic, the high debt burden, drought and hunger on the African continent. The coordinated efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to resolve the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict is one encouraging example of close cooperation in the cause of peace. Although the stakes are high, the expectation that the conflict will be solved should, hopefully, be met. Through their combined efforts, the two organizations should be able to convince the parties of the benefits of peace and the need for cooperation.

The conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, the Sudan, Sierra Leone and Somalia are still unresolved and require the attention of a joint United Nations-OAU effort as well as the constructive engagement of the parties to the conflicts and all Member States in the region. The United Nations and the OAU should take the lead in urging African leaders to become leaders for peace and development. Without the strong commitment of African leaders to peace, the role of the United Nations and the OAU will only be one of "damage control".

On a positive note, Norway would like to mention the close cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the areas of eradication of small arms and landmines. Norway urges the organizations to cooperate even more closely to alleviate the burden of destruction caused by mines and small arms in countries on the African continent. Norway takes this opportunity to point out the positive engagement by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in agreeing to a moratorium on the sale of and trafficking in small arms. This should serve as an example to be followed by others.

The OAU is currently undergoing a restructuring process to which a group of countries — the Friends of the OAU — has been contributing. When this restructuring process has been implemented the "new" OAU will, hopefully, be better equipped to face the challenges of the new millennium. The possibility of further developing the concept of the Friends of the OAU — with United Nations participation — should be considered. This could enhance cooperation of all external organizations and countries with the OAU. It would also alleviate the administrative burden on the OAU Secretariat. This would allow the OAU to develop a more programmatic approach to its activities, which could enhance the organization's efficiency. Norway will strongly support such an initiative and encourage the United Nations to work with the OAU to develop such an approach.

Cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the OAU is especially important in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping operations. However, with regard to regional and subregional efforts to achieve stronger economic and political integration, the United Nations could also play a pivotal role in assisting the OAU and the subregional African organizations to realize this. The contribution of subregional efforts towards the goal of an African Economic Community should be encouraged. Thus, a stronger United Nations supportive role for economic integration should be emphasized, and stronger OAU involvement in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) should be fostered.

The Norwegian Government would like to emphasize that the United Nations should play a stronger role in coordinating development assistance to the African continent. We would also like to forge closer ties of cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. Such efforts, combined with a

continuation of bilateral development cooperation and assistance through various United Nations initiatives, show our strong commitment to African development. We therefore urge the different United Nations agencies to intensify the coordination of their regional programmes in Africa and to strengthen their harmonization with African regional and subregional programmes.

Let me close by recalling chapter VII of the Millennium Declaration, "Meeting the special needs of Africa". For the goals and aspirations of this chapter of the Declaration to come true and be speedily implemented, we will all depend on a new partnership with Africa. The OAU should play a pivotal role in such a partnership.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): At the outset, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. As in previous years, the report provides a clear description of the activities undertaken by the two organizations in the framework of their ongoing cooperation.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the increased cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, as set out in the Secretary-General's report. We welcome the continued practice of holding regular consultations between the secretariats of the two organizations, the most recent example being the meeting held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, on 10 and 11 April 2000. As agreed by the two secretariats, the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity needs to be further consolidated. This can be done by placing greater emphasis on steps that will enhance the institutional capacity of the OAU and the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the priorities and programme areas identified by the meeting.

Regarding the mechanisms for enhancing United Nations-OAU cooperation, the establishment of the United Nations Liaison Office with the OAU definitely constitutes an important step. We note that the Liaison Office has been entrusted with important tasks that need to be undertaken in close cooperation and coordination with the OAU.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the cooperation between the two organizations in the maintenance of peace and security, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. During the past year, the OAU has continued its efforts aimed at the peaceful settlement of conflicts in the continent.

My country fully supports these efforts of the OAU, and has on various occasions made its own contributions to the resolution of conflicts in different parts of Africa. With respect to the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Ethiopia has demonstrated its full respect for and commitment to the OAU by cooperating with its efforts to resolve the crisis. These efforts of the OAU, with the cooperation and assistance of the United Nations and other interested parties, led to the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea in Algiers on 18 June 2000. The Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities provides, that a "Peacekeeping Mission shall be deployed by the United Nations under the auspices of OAU". (*S/2000/627, enclosure, para. 2*) It further stipulates, in paragraph 4, that "The size and the composition of the Peacekeeping Mission shall be adapted to the mission assigned to it and shall be determined by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and OAU, with the acceptance of the two Parties." Furthermore, in accordance with paragraph 14 of the Agreement of Cessation of Hostilities, the OAU and the United Nations commit themselves to guarantee the respect for this commitment undertaken by the parties in the Agreement.

Against this backdrop, the Security Council, in paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 1320 (2000), establishing the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations "to coordinate with the Organization of African Unity in the implementation of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities".

In this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his continued efforts, including his appointment of Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun as his Special Envoy in dealing with the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. We welcome the Secretary-General's intention to continue collaborating with the OAU in supporting the subsequent phase of its mediation efforts in the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities.

In the area of economic and social development, Africa continues to face serious challenges. Despite the efforts of most African countries, the economic

situation in the continent remains precarious, and economic recovery and development continue to be severely hindered by multiple factors. The persistence of conflicts, debt burden, the decline in official development assistance, the net outflow of resources and the question of access to world markets, to mention just a few factors, are paralysing growth and development in Africa. As these challenges continue to grow, the situation in the continent, including the role that the United Nations could play in cooperation with the OAU, needs a close and an objective evaluation.

In spite of the challenges and difficulties, especially in mobilizing international support for Africa, the United Nations has remained engaged through its various agencies in many vital areas related to African economic recovery and development. In this context, my delegation also acknowledges the important role of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, which, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity and the African Development Bank, continues to play a crucial role in the establishment and consolidation of the African Economic Community and the subregional economic communities, which will serve as building blocks for the Community. Cooperation over the past year between the OAU and various United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and others, has also been quite encouraging.

With regard to issues related to social matters, we welcome the achievements made through the OAU's cooperation with, among others, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The progress that the OAU and UNHCR have made with respect to the welfare of refugees in Africa is particularly worth mentioning. Similarly, the important support of WHO in critical areas such as polio eradication, malaria prevention and control and the struggle against HIV/AIDS in Africa needs to be further enhanced. In this respect, we welcome the establishment of the United Nations-OAU task force that would articulate a plan of action in the fight against HIV/AIDS, to be achieved, we hope, in the next two years. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to United Nations agencies, the international community and donor countries to give more attention to Africa's struggle against the HIV/AIDS scourge, which is afflicting the continent to an alarming degree.

Since its establishment in 1963, the Organization of African Unity has endeavoured in pursuit of the lofty objectives envisioned by the founding fathers to meet the multifaceted challenges facing Africa. In the area of peace and security, the OAU's efforts have culminated in the setting up of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa, while in the sphere of economic development and regional economic integration, the conclusion of the Abuja Treaty and the establishment of the African Economic Community mark yet other milestone achievements.

These achievements and the efforts of Africa in general could be sustained and further enhanced only in a favourable international environment of genuine partnership on the part of the rest of the world. In this regard, the role of the United Nations and its cooperation with the OAU will remain indispensable in the years to come.

Mr. Urib (Namibia): Allow me first of all to associate my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Togo on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. The report covers a wide range of issues which are important to both organizations. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU will strengthen the capacity of the OAU in responding to the increasing needs of its member States, and we believe in this way it will contribute to attainment of the goals of the United Nations.

In this context, we welcome the ongoing contacts and consultations between the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the OAU Permanent Observer Mission in New York. Similarly, cooperation between the OAU and the special envoys of the Secretary-General of the United Nations provide an important and direct link, especially in the area of conflict prevention and management.

We note the contribution of United Nations experts in the design of peace agreements in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to mention but two examples. However, timely action by the United Nations Security Council in the implementation of peace agreements in Africa is crucial and can either make or break those agreements. We also concur with the view of the Secretary-General that continuous provision of much-needed support for peacekeeping activities in Africa is vital. The Brahimi report speaks eloquently to these issues, and we must all ensure the early implementation of the recommendations contained therein.

In that connection, we reiterate our call on the international community — especially the donor countries — to contribute to the Trust Fund for Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa, as well as to the OAU Peace Fund aimed at building African peacekeeping capacities. The need for additional financial resources to enhance cooperation cannot be overemphasized.

The humanitarian needs of African refugees and internally displaced persons also need concerted efforts by the international community. We have said it before, and we would like to reiterate again, that the Organization and, indeed, the international community, cannot afford to give up on African refugees and other displaced persons in various parts of the African continent. The provision of support by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to the OAU in developing its institutional capacity for humanitarian coordination and exchange of early-warning information is therefore crucial, and must be strengthened.

We must do everything to eliminate the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa and the world at large. We must also recognize the disproportionately high price paid by countries hosting refugees. In the case of Africa, many of those countries are among the least developed on the continent. Thus the problem of refugees places an added burden on their already weak economies. We call for increased support to those countries. We also recognize the difficulties faced by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Africa

as to enable it to cater to the needs of refugees in

Notwithstanding the current economic and social difficulties, many African countries are making tremendous efforts to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development in Africa. The establishment of the African Economic Community is therefore an important phase of the African development process that will assist in consolidating the efforts of African countries to revive and develop African economies. In that context, the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa can make a meaningful contribution through the full and effective implementation of the programme for the Decade.

Furthermore, support to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization is also critical to enable that organization to carry out its programmes in Africa. In addition, the continued cooperation between the OAU and the secretariat of the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development is welcome, for it contributes to assisting African countries in multilateral trade negotiations. We call upon the international community to support the capacity of African countries to derive optimal benefits from globalization and to deal with the risks and challenges it poses. In that connection, the early implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration will certainly hasten the achievement of that objective.

Furthermore, we welcome the collaboration between the OAU and the World Bank, as well as the International Monetary Fund's technical assistance to OAU member States to strengthen their capacities for macroeconomic management. We thank them and all our development partners for their invaluable support and contributions to African development.

But the list of African problems is indeed very long. In addition to the economic, humanitarian and security problems I have referred to, Africa must deal with the decimating onslaught of HIV/AIDS and the devastation of malaria, among other health hazards. The continent is truly going through its darkest hour. This is therefore no time for ordinary solutions to African problems, but an hour for extraordinary and visionary efforts on the part of both Africans and the international community alike. What Africa needs is nothing short of a Marshall Plan.

We believe that cooperation between the United

objective. We view cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU as an important partnership with

far-reaching benefits. At the OAU summit held in Algeria in 1999, African heads of State adopted a Declaration that, among other things, stated:

> "While expressing satisfaction at the various cooperation initiatives and approaches in favour of Africa, we reaffirm our readiness and willingness to promote, with all our partners, a genuine partnership devoid of any selfish calculations for influence, a partnership that respects the unity of the continent and aims at the development of Africa, rather than using it as a mere reservoir of raw materials and a market for manufactured goods, a partnership that enables Africa to achieve its integration, ensure its development for the benefit of its peoples and occupy its rightful place on the international scene for the mutual and inclusive benefit of the international community as a whole." (*A/54/424, annex II*)

At this point I would like to paraphrase two of the key themes mentioned by the Foreign Minister of Namibia, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, on the occasion of the general debate this year: without the demonstration of enlightened self-interest by our development partners in embracing the idea of a Marshall Plan for Africa, all our efforts will not make the required drastic impact on the situation in Africa; without a serious consideration of the proposition for compensation and reparations to Africa for injustices done in the past, justice will not be served and that chapter of our history will remain open. This is the time for reconciliation based on courage, solidarity and justice. Namibia trusts that cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations will continue to be premised upon, and promote, these virtues.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2011 (XX), of 11 October 1965, I now call on the observer for the Organization of African Unity to make a statement.

Mr. Kebe (Organization of African Unity) (*spoke in French*): First of all, on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), I would like to extend to the President my warmest congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I would also like to thank everyone who spoke before me to support the efforts made by the OAU and the United

partnership. In particular, I would like to mention the representative and current Chairman of the OAU, the Ambassador of Togo.

My thanks, of course, go also to the Secretariat of the United Nations for its tireless efforts to raise cooperation between our two organizations to an ever higher level. Last year, we described that cooperation as exemplary; today I strongly reiterate the satisfaction of the OAU with that cooperation, and the great importance it attaches to it.

I want to express my satisfaction at the return of Somalia to the comity of nations after an absence of more than a decade. I urge all States members of our organizations to help sustain the momentum generated by the meeting held at Arta, Djibouti. Further, I urge Somali leaders to pursue their endeavours towards national reconciliation and the rebuilding of State structures.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/55/498) describes precisely and in detail the achievements of the United Nations and of the OAU over the past year. Twice-yearly meetings between the two Secretaries-General make it possible to define overall direction and to reaffirm the principles and purposes that guide our cooperation. Consultations held periodically at New York and at Addis Ababa and joint work in the field have enabled our two teams to carry out the directives of our leadership and the recommendations set out in resolutions of the General Assembly.

Let me observe here that today's debate takes place following the thirty-sixth session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, which was held at Lome last July.

Before that, in 1999 at Algiers and at Sirte, Africa's heads of State or Government took important decisions aimed at strengthening the continent's capacity to address the many challenges it faces, both at the continent and world levels. Among those decisions, let me mention Africa's firm and resolute decision that 2000 should be a year of peace and stability in the continent. It was also decided to hasten the process of integration in Africa through speedy implementation of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. Those are two major issues for consideration and action; they are also promising areas for cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations, and I shall therefore make some

The decision that 2000 should be a year of peace and stability in Africa reflects our determination to change the state of affairs by making a more positive impact on the future of our countries and our peoples. To that end, we must turn our back on tension and conflicts, with their resultant massive flows of refugees and displaced persons, and to open the way to an era of security and stability in which all of our human and material resources can finally be used to build our States, consolidate democracy and ensure economic and social development for our countries and well-being and improved lives for our peoples.

Here I would refer to the preliminary work of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871).

At Algiers, our heads of State or Government, in the course of an extremely honest and open debate, addressed head-on the concerns of Africa's partners about democratization, good governance and respect for human rights. The resulting decision was that leaders who had seized power by overthrowing a democratically elected Government would no longer be accepted in the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. That indicates the seriousness and determination of African leaders in that connection.

At present, we must manage current conflicts and find lasting solutions for them. Then, we must spare no effort to prevent the outbreak of further conflicts. That constitutes a genuine programme, and it requires ever closer cooperation with the United Nations. In connection with conflict management, the OAU and African subregional organizations — the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) — have taken the initiative by bringing parties together at the negotiating table, which has led to the signature of peace agreements.

But implementing such agreements requires financial and material resources beyond the capacity of those organizations. Hence the need for the United Nations, and more specifically the Security Council, to step in promptly by dispatching peacekeeping forces or peace-building missions. But the Council's slow has been necessary in mid-stream to devise ad hoc procedures for specific situations, such as those of Somalia and of Rwanda.

It is urgent that conflicts be prevented; it is always less costly to invest in prevention. That is why we call for greater cooperation in this sphere between the United Nations on the one hand and the OAU and African regional organizations on the other. The OAU needs more support from the United Nations to develop an early warning system within the OAU's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Moreover, there is no denying that the United Nations has a greater capacity for gathering information that it could share with the OAU.

The OAU needs to work in close cooperation with the United Nations on how to deal with regions or countries when everything points to the imminent outbreak of conflict. It is sometimes very difficult to draw a distinction between prevention and intervention.

Then there is the social and humanitarian field; as a result of overt or latent conflicts in Africa, there is a growing number of refugees, displaced persons and repatriated persons. To this we must add the effects of natural disasters such as floods, cyclones and droughts. This calls for greater cooperation and coordination between our two organizations. For the 7 million African refugees, we are asking for resources commensurate with the scale of the continent-wide disaster, and for equal treatment vis-à-vis refugees in other continents.

I cannot conclude this portion of my statement without mentioning the important meeting of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa, held at Abuja in May 2000. This new process brings together, in an interdependent way, the concepts of security, stability, development and cooperation, with a collective approach encompassing all of Africa. This is a thunderbolt in the African sky; while there was not a great deal of media coverage, this event can in many respects be compared with the Helsinki process.

The second important decision taken at the fourth OAU Extraordinary Summit, held at Sirte, and then crystallized at Lome in July, was to create an African Union in conformity with the fundamental purposes of

Establishing the African Economic Community, and to strengthen and consolidate the regional economic communities that are the pillars of the attainment of the objectives of the African Economic Community and of the anticipated Union.

That was a decision of fundamental importance. It came at the end of a long process that began at Lagos in 1980, that continued at Abuja in 1991 and that culminated at Tripoli in 1999, then to be given concrete form at Lome in 2000. If Africa wants to count in the century of globalization and play its part in the management of world affairs, it must do so united, with its constituent parts acting in solidarity, and on the basis of true integration. That is the great challenge facing Africa on the eve of the third millennium — the road that it must take if it is to achieve economic and social development.

Africa can take up this challenge only with the help and support of the international community. I should like to take this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to the international community for the support provided for the development process in Africa through initiatives at national, subregional and continent-wide levels.

Despite all of this support, poverty is still the major problem in many countries in our continent. When we speak of poverty in Africa, we are talking not about mere statistics but about real problems faced by the poor on a daily basis. Production is at an all-time low, income does not even come close to meeting the basic needs of people. High rates of inflation and unemployment are widespread. Most, if not all, African Governments have undergone structural adjustment, taking political and social risks that have far outweighed the tangible economic benefits that have resulted.

Africa is also handicapped by widespread pandemics, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. All of the concerted efforts on the part of Africa and the international community are being thwarted by the devastating effects of these two major scourges that, if nothing is done, will wipe out all the progress made in economic and social development in the continent. The United Nations Secretary-General has already taken the initiative to lead the International Partnership against

At this time of globalization, when only the strongest economies survive, Africa wants above all to be self-reliant, delving into its resources and its imagination to come up with initiatives that will save it. But it will need international solidarity if it is to succeed in its task. Such solidarity should, first of all, be demonstrated in the case of the foreign debt, which was assessed at about $220 billion in 1997. Debt servicing consumes all of the resources that would go towards development plans for the continent. That is why the OAU is calling on its partners to consider the best means of simply cancelling the entire debt, thereby making available significant resources for the economic recovery of the continent. We appeal to the solidarity of our partners to help to find a definitive solution to the problem and call for an increased number of new and additional resources to supplement direct foreign investment and make African countries more competitive. It is in our partners' interests to deal with an Africa whose economy has recovered, an Africa that is strong, stable and in control of its own destiny.

The concept of the global village has never meant so much as it means today. Globalization is characterized by the interrelationship between the means of communication and knowledge, cultural crossover and economic interdependence. Distances are shrinking, differences and peculiarities are being reduced and people are being brought closer together, thereby ushering in a new humanism — the humanism of the twenty-first century. Such is the state of the world today, as conveyed by the Declaration of the Millennium Summit that was recently held here. But that vision of the world seems to me to be far from the vision of most people, who still think in terms of different countries and continents. They should rather be thinking about a global village, with its underlying foundation and value of solidarity. We must make this qualitative leap forward if in the future we are to avoid such disasters as those that brought bloodshed to the first half of this century and continuing tension to the second half.

The United Nations and the OAU now fully understand these new challenges and I am happy to say, here today, that they are now striving to make people and institutions ready to live the good life in the village

inform members that a draft resolution under this item will be submitted at a later date.

I should also like to inform members that the remaining two items on the agenda for this morning, namely, agenda item 23, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community", and agenda item 36, "Bethlehem 2000", will be taken up this afternoon promptly at 3 p.m.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to express gratitude to our interpreters for their special effort today.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.